

GAZETTE DES BEAUX-ARTS

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ORIGIN AND MEANING OF THE MANDORLA

THE early English renditions of the Ascension of Christ which Professor Shapiro recently discussed in the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts"¹ indeed open a number of interesting questions. It seems to me that the question of the mandorla is among those affected. Thus, while taking advantage of a new advance in art historical research, it might be possible at the same time to trace somewhat further an old problem of Christian iconography.

As was shown by Shapiro, the early formation of a naturalistic trend in medieval art and thinking can be perceived in the succession of representational types of the Ascension, which eventually lead to the image of the disappearing Christ. The new types were invented in order to satisfy the novel desire of factual illustration of the text and to meet a claim of natural verity, even in the portrayal of the miraculous. A punctilious, puristic attitude towards the text becomes manifest, and a certain critical opposition is shown towards traditional conceptions regarding the represented event. Accordingly, there is a tendency to revise the schemes and symbols presented by the older pictorial tradition. The disposition generally prevails in these representations to supplant old symbols by new devices which seem more apt to illustrate the act of the Ascension in terms of immediate and empirical experience.

However, if one asks for details, it will be noticed that a varying use of the mandorla in these compositions often contributes to express the various shades of

1. 1943, volume XXII, 135 ff.

meaning. The mandorla around the figure of Christ has since the VI century formed a regular part of at least the so-called Syrian type of the Ascension, and subsequently has become a very common feature in the representation of this scene². It is interesting to observe here that in a style which, for the reasons just mentioned, must be described as rather anti-traditionalistic, this old symbol also becomes subjected to changes and, in certain instances, is deliberately omitted. Evidently it constitutes one of the earlier devices, the use of which was revised by the artists of the X and XI centuries in order to express their new, more naturalistic and subjective outlook. It must be assumed that these artists imputed to the mandorla a precision of meaning not always or not equally apparent in other monuments. This fact may interest us from the outset.

For the term "mandorla", as it is now in common use, is purely descriptive, and as such might be applied to almost anything of an oval or ellipsoid outline. Thus, in modern art criticism, it conveniently indicates the well-known frame of oval or pointed shape, often vari-colored, which especially in Byzantine and medieval art is frequently placed around the figure of Christ, the Madonna, or, less frequently, around other holy persons. By custom, the term may even be used in cases where this frame is circular and therefore not at all reminiscent of the almond form which the word implies. But the name alone conveys no information as to what the device really means. The question is, does the mandorla correspond to any actual object in the given instances where it occurs? As long as this cannot be answered plainly, the object must be regarded as problematic.

* * *

The mandorla is often called an aureole, or glory, and in many cases the three words are used as virtual synonyms. "The mandorla, or glory", says M. Dalton's much used handbook, "surrounding the whole body, encloses the figure of the infant Christ in his mother's arms in the gospels of Etchmiadzin . . ." ³ These other two designations are less neutral in meaning than the term mandorla. If used in their regular sense, they signify a halo of light around some object. The glory, particularly, denotes a supernatural light or splendor supposed to proceed from the body of a saint person. Consequently both expressions refer to phenomena akin to that of the nimbus which itself can be described as a "cloud of light-like rays emanating from a light center" ⁴. There is also the "majestas" in which the apocalyptical appearance of Christ is anticipated, and which in Byzantine art likewise assumed the form of a mandorla. It is at times described in similar terms

2. For the representational types of the Ascension see: *Ibid.*, p. 135 and n. 1.

3. M. DALTON, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology*, 1911, p. 682 f. For another almost identical statement cf: K. KÜNSTLE, *Ikongraphie d. Christl. Kunst*, 1928, I, 28. Cf. the fundamental collection of material in: G. WILPERT, *D. Röm. Mosaiken . . .*, I, 97 ff. His explanation, also, concentrates on the appearances of light.

4. DIDRON, *Christian Iconography*, I, 1. WILPERT, *l.c.*, calls the mandorla "great nimbus".

by early writers, though not so clearly as we might wish⁵. The expression "glory", if used to denote this miraculous phenomenon, can indeed claim biblical descendancy. To this point we will return later⁶.

The trouble is that, although this explanation of the mandorla is acceptable in certain cases, it is less satisfactory in others. For instance, the Ascension of Christ as rendered on the well known Monza phials (Fig. 1) is described by E. Mâle as follows: "*Assis sur un trône au milieu d'une auréole que portent quatre anges, le Christ apparaît dans le ciel.*"⁷ As a statement of facts, the description fits the representation perfectly, but in its very precision it tacitly accepts a very unusual idea, to say the least, as implicit in this scene. Obviously the angels lift the enthroned Christ up in the sky, and thus in the way of symbolical imagery the ascension is made plausible as a momentary event. Nor are the laws of mechanics neglected. Indeed the clearness of the scene shown rests to a consider-

able extent on the visualization of these laws by means of the winged carriers, employed here as in other representations of older art⁸. When their task is properly recognized, how shall we explain the equally obvious fact that the angels do not actually carry Christ, but only the mandorla which surrounds him? If the latter indeed were nothing but an aureole, that is, an emanation of light proceeding from the figure within⁹, the angels performing their task could hardly be explained. The symbolical reality of the representation would be destroyed, for no one can be transported by a mere "shine" that envelopes him. In this example and in similar ones more or less directly related to it, including some of the most common Romanesque representations of the glorified Christ, simply to call the mandorla an aureole is not a sufficient explanation, or at least not one that can be accepted without further commentary.

Yet, although a mutually exclusive identification of mandorla and aureole



FIG. 1. — ASCENSION OF CHRIST. — Monza phial. From "AJA". 19, 1915.

5. Round mandorla described as "*lucidus globus*" by PAULINUS OF NOLA and other utterances of early Christian writers: W. W. S. COOK, "Art Bull." 6, 1923, 41 f., with reference to WILPERT, *l.c.* I, 99 f. Cf. the similar description of the Persian aura of light in texts like the one quoted below, n. 58.

6. Cf. Num. XIV, 10, text of the Vulgate: "*apparuit gloria Domini*", etc.

7. *L'art religieux du XII siècle en France*, p. 88; cf. 89, on the Ascension in the Rabula Gospel, where "*Le Christ n'apparaît plus assis, mais debout dans son auréole, qui ne fut désormais soutenue que par deux anges*".

8. Cf. BRENDÉL, *Classical "Ariels"*, in: "Studies in Honor of Frederick W. Shipley", (Washington U. Studies, Language and Literature, n. 4), 75 ff.

9. For this conception see: MÂLE, *l.c.* 94, à propos the iconography of the transfiguration: The figures of the two prophets "*ne sont plus confirmés dans la même auréole que le Christ . . . C'est du Christ seul qu'émane la lumière*".

would not be advisable, one feels strongly the need of a definite and not too vague statement regarding the former. To speak, for instance, of the mandorla as "*la gloire ovale, symbole de la présence ou de l'intervention divine*"¹⁰, is a generally correct remark, but for the interpretation of single monuments one would wish for a more precise solution. The tradition underlying these works was certainly based on more definite concepts than that. Nor does it seem sufficient to state the case in this way: "*Una variante del nimbo e l'aureola, o mandorla . . . Essa e simbolo d'apoteosi e di gloria*"¹¹. One is merely led to the question: Why did it become so?

Two other more specific recent theories have yet to be mentioned. The one suggests that the Christian representations of the Lord in the mandorla took over the form and, originally, perhaps also the meaning of pagan representations showing a god surrounded by the zodiac¹². In this case, the mandorla would suggest the circle of heaven. It is true that the mandorla is often seen floating in the air, and in certain instances its significance may be so broadened as to equal that of heaven¹³. But these require special investigation not to be undertaken here. Concrete, astral indications are by no means among the standard characteristics of the mandorla, and particularly among the earlier monuments many representations patently call for another explanation.

The second of these theories approaches the problem from a different angle. The mandorla is compared with the circular shields of Roman art, which are held by winged or unwinged carriers and often record the name of a person or his portrait¹⁴. Accordingly, it is suggested that the representations of Christ in the mandorla evolved from the Roman device of the *imago clipeata*, carried to heaven by Victories, or from the medaillon portraits of playwrights such as those forming the frontispiece in two manuscripts of Terence¹⁵. Although the type of the Victory lifting a shield portrait undoubtedly left its impact on early Christian art¹⁶, certain difficulties in this theory cannot be overlooked. For instance, the Madonna of Chapel XXVIII at Bawit just mentioned in footnote 15, is, in type, an enthroned "*Blacherniotissa*". The oval which she holds and which includes the figure of the Child might because of its shape be called a mandorla. But what does it really represent? Even here it seems questionable whether an aureole of sheer light would be held in the manner represented. The object may be a

10. M. VAN BERCHEM - E. CLOUZOT, *Mosaïques Chrétiennes*, 35.

11. O. TOMASSONI in: *Enciclopedia Italiana*, 24, 830, s.v. "nimbo".

12. F. SAXL, *Mithras*, 97 f. Cf. for a similar suggestion without further specification: O. WULFF, *Altchristliche u. Byzant. Kunst*, (HKW.), 1, 3.

13. SAXL, *l.c.* 98, refers to the risen Christ on the doors of St. Sabina. I hope with another occasion to deal further with these representations. Cf. also F. VAN DER MEER, *Maestas Domini*, 255 f.

14. G. W. ELDERKIN, "AJA." 42, 1938, 227 ff.

15. ELDERKIN, *l.c.* 231; cf. 233: "The Bawit fresco of the Virgin holding a mandorla toward the spectator is a Christian reuse of the Victory holding a shield, so that one may see what is represented upon it".

16. Beside the material quoted by ELDERKIN, *l.c.* 233, cf: H. LECLERCQ, *Manuel d'archéologie chrétienne*, 1, 145, n. 1, and 514 ff; of the interesting Victoria from Ascalon, a more recent photograph is now found in: E. WATZINGER, *Denkm. Palästinas*, pl. 31, fig. 71. A bust of Christ, included in a circular *clipeus*, in the Roman Catacomb of SS. Marcus and Marcellianus: "Byzantion", 15, 1940-41, 4 f.

clipeus¹⁷. On the other hand, the mandorla in the Ascension picture of the Rabula manuscript, and in other representations of the Ascension, cannot be a shield because it contains the figure of Christ in person, not *in imagine*. Moreover, any such explanation would not do justice to representations in which the mandorla surrounds a person walking on the ground, not carried by others. Nevertheless, this theory has one distinct merit; it draws attention to the fact that in many compositions the mandorla is portrayed as an object sufficiently substantial to be supported by assistant figures who, indeed, act precisely as did the ancient Victories carrying someone's glory skyward on a round shield.

* * *

Yet it is possible to judge with much greater certainty about the mandorla and its meaning if only illustrative compositions are considered which allow for check-

17. In Byzantine art three different schemes are distinguishable which combine with the representations of the Madonna a framed image of Christ:

I. — Regular "Platytera"-type. Numerous examples in: N. P. KONDAKOV, *Ikonoграфия Bogomateri*, 2, 107 ff. A Madonna orans, having before her breast a circular image of the child. The image, like a common *imago clipeata*, see above n. 14, shows only face and shoulders of the child. It is usually called a medaillon, cf: G. M. KAUFMANN, *Handbuch d. Christl. Archäologie*, 634, "Christusmedaillon"; K. KÜNSTLE, *Ikonoographie d. Christl. Kunst*, 1, 620 ff. The Madonna does not hold the medaillon, which seems to be floating.

II. — The Madonna holds the medaillon with both hands; see: KONDAKOV, *l.c.* 132 ff. Of this type seems to be the painting on one of the piers of Sta. Maria Antiqua, Rome; "Art Bull." 7, 1924-25, 143 and pl. 105, fig. 39. The medaillon is similar as in type I. This representation also occurs on coins; see: KAUFMANN, *l.c.* 375, fig. 180 and 634, fig. 329. Cf: the gold coin of Romanus IV, († 1071), in: VOLBACH-SALLES-DUTHUIT, *Byzantine Art*, pl. 44, M.

III. — The Madonna, seated, holds the standing child in an oval frame; KONDAKOV, *l.c.* 1, 305 ff. This is the type of the Bawit-Madonna. For the example in Sta. Maria Antiqua, Rome, and the distribution of the type, see now: M. AVERY, "Art Bull." *l.c.* 143 and pl. 104, fig. 37. Another specimen is illustrated by M. LAWRENCE, "Art Bull." *l.c.* 154 and pl. 107, fig. 1. The early examples of the type come from Egypt; cf: CH. R. MOREY, *Early Christian art*, 81. In some instances the Madonna is represented as standing. This is the case of a Syrian miniature in Paris, *l.c.* fig. 71, where the Mother, according to OMONT, "*Tient devant elle, se détachant dans l'ovale bleu du nimbe, la figure . . . du Christ*"; cf: G. H. LUQUET, "RA." 19, 1924, 142, who adds the remark that the figure carries the nimbus, including the child, as if in front of herself. She holds "*une sorte de tableau à encadrement ovale*". Likewise, LECLERCQ, in: CABROL-LECLERCQ, *Dictionnaire . . .*, 16, 2013 f, a propos a Byzantine lead-seal with a similar representation, describes the Madonna as holding a "*médailon ovale*".

As to the interpretation, LUQUET suggested that some examples with which he dealt in "RA.", *l.c.* ff., especially the Syrian miniature just named, should be recognized as representing the *Madonna Gravida*, her status being indicated by a kind of symbolical transparency; that is, another pictorial variation of the idea underlying the term "Platytera", cf: KÜNSTLE, *l.c.* This suggestion, however, seems not acceptable, chiefly because the standing representations of this type cannot be separated from those others which show the Virgin seated and really holding the child in front of herself, as e.g. the Bawit-fresco. The assured representations of the *Gravida* to which LUQUET points, are of later date, and it seems not impossible that, in turn, they really derived from the older type of the Madonna holding the child in a Mandorla. But they would merely constitute a posthumous pictorial interpretation of the old image, reflecting the difficulty of its precise understanding. Originally the oval device which in the older representations, at least of types II and III, surrounds the Child, must have denoted an independent object held by the mother.

Accordingly, this object is often called a "medaillon" by students, cf: the above quotations and DALTON, *Byzant. Art*, 673 f. It seems, indeed, that the representations here called type III, are best compared with those of type II. The main difference between both consists in the fact that in type II the Child is surrounded by a circular form, in type III by an oval. But the oval form may be due only to the need of circumscribing the full length figure of the Child, as it happened with the mandorla in other instances; see below, n. 69. If this were the case, it would seem more natural in all three types to conceive of the "medaillon" as an image, rather than the living Child surrounded by an aureole. The round form shown in types I and II might well represent a regular *clipeus* or even a mirror; the oval in type III is another form of the same medaillon rendered in the two other types. The blue color with which the oval is several times illuminated appears to be suitable for the rendering of both a *clipeus* and a nimbus, cf: ELDERKIN, *l.c.* 236, and below, n. 63. In either case, a special explanation would be required; but the question cannot here be further investigated.

ing by well-known texts. The representations of the Ascension, previously discussed by Dewald and others¹⁸, provide a paragon example for such a method.

Two gospels merely state that Christ "was carried into heaven"¹⁹. In *Acts* I, 9, it is further mentioned that a cloud received him²⁰. The representations which Dewald classified as the "oriental type", including the Monza phials and Rabula gospel, show Christ carried into heaven in a mandorla. This, we must then assume, signified the cloud that received him.

The same result can be confirmed by another, more negative, consideration. The "hellenistic type" of the scene represents Christ walking directly into heaven from a mountain top. This variation amounts to a different version or interpretation of the event itself²¹. As long as Christ is so represented, the cloud does not yet carry him. Consequently in the older examples of this type, there is no mandorla.

The observation still holds good when we turn to the early English illustrations based on these types. The *Sacramentary* of Drogo depicts Christ carrying a cross and walking on the

mountain²². Although the hand of God issues from heaven above him, as in other instances of this type, there is no mandorla. It is only in miniatures from the X century on, like the *Benedictional* of Ethelwold²³, that Christ is represented walking and, at the same time, is actually seen stepping into the mandorla or already enveloped by it and floating



FIG. 2. — ASCENSION OF CHRIST. — Gospels from Poussay. From A. Goldschmidt, "German Illum." 2, pl. 22.

18. "AJA." 19, 1915, 277 ff; for more recent literature see: SHAPIRO, *l.c.* 135, n. 1.

19. MARCUS, XVI, 19 "assumptus est in coelum"; LUCAS, XXIV, 51, "ferebatur in coelum".

20. "Elevatus est; et nubes suscepit eum ab oculis eorum". For other sources see DEWALD, *l.c.* 278.

21. Perhaps prompted by the words of the same report, *Acts* I, 10-11, "cumque intuerentur in caelum euntem illum" . . .

22. DEWALD, *l.c.* 295, fig. 8, and other similar examples, 395 ff.

23. SHAPIRO, *l.c.* 137, fig. 2.

in midair²⁴.

Finally, there is the type of Christ standing in the air and supported only by a little floating platform of irregular shape²⁵. This also represents the cloud. The symbolical form of the cloud is here substituted by one of comparatively naturalistic appearance. It seems as if the artists were quite aware of the implications of the change which they introduced into the conventional scheme. In those renderings of the Ascension in which the cloud is indicated beneath the feet of Christ, the mandorla is not required and consequently is omitted from the picture.

In all these cases, the mandorla is consistently treated as one possible form of visualizing the cloud mentioned in the textual report of Christ's Ascension. Indeed it is the most ancient and, therefore, the most traditional of all forms in which this cloud was ever rendered. The same original significance must be ascribed to the mandorla encircling Christ in the scenes of the *Majestas* and the day of judgment, when according to the aforesaid report in the *Acts*, he is predicted to return to earth on a cloud, "in like manner"²⁶. In almost all of these representations, the cloud is further supported by angels, not expressly mentioned in the texts. These angels are only the heavenly carriers who in the metaphorical language of art, and even of ancient art, are supposed to keep



FIG. 3. — ASCENSION OF CHRIST. — Codex of Egbert. From "AJA". 19, 1915, 300, Fig. 12.

24. *Codex of Egbert*, DEWALD, *l.c.* 300, fig. 12. See below, n. 30.

25. Examples, DEWALD, *l.c.* 304 ff.; SHAPIRO, *l.c.* 136 f.

26. I, 11, "Sic veniet quemadmodum vidistis eum euntem in coelum." Cf. MT. XXIV, 30. For the iconography of the return of Christ in the mandorla see: W. W. S. COOK, "Art Bull." 6, 1923, 40 ff.; F. VAN DER MEER, *Majestas Domini*, 185 ff. Cf. *l.c.* 264 f., on the cloud-like character of the mandorla, declared to be an "enveloppe éthérique".

the mandorla floating by their action²⁷. By every means the mandorla — that is, the cloud — is shown to be the very vehicle of the Ascension. However, in those representations of X century origin, where Christ is seen walking in the mandorla but not supported by the angels, a reflection may well be found of particular considerations, similar to the passage of the *Blickling Homilies*, recently discussed by Shapiro²⁸. These considerations regard the cloud in the Ascension, and the question raised is, whether Christ was lifted by it, or whether he disappeared into it. When the *Blickling* sermonist argues: "The cloud did not make its appearance there; nor did the cloud raise him up, but he took the cloud before him . . . and he, in the cloud, disappeared from their sight and ascended into heaven . . ."²⁹, the Codex of Egbert shows how the old symbolism of the mandorla could be used to express this particular reasoning as well³⁰ (Fig. 3). The angels are conspicuously absent, and visibly Christ walks into heaven, enveloped in the cloud but not carried by it. Similarly, angels are represented in the ascension of the Ethelwold Benedictional, but they do not touch the mandorla. This attitude corresponds with the words of Bede, who wrote that "Christ was not supported, but only escorted, by angels in his assumption to heaven"³¹. Thus the miniaturists illustrate the literary controversies on Christ's Ascension by a different use of the mandorla. Eventually, as was shown by Shapiro, this revision of the representational type led to the new image of the disappearing Christ³². But on the other hand, it can be demonstrated that an uncertainty of interpretation similar to the one reflected in this controversy, was symptomatic from ancient times both of the mandorla and of the cloud for which it stands.

* * *

The meaning of the nimbus, a kindred phenomenon, could already seem doubtful to the grammarian Servius, writing at about the turn of the IV to the V century. Normally he explains it as a round halo³³, but in commenting on Vergil, *Aen.* X, 634, he states that in this case "nimbus" must mean clouds: "if it were not so, we would assume it to be the lustre that surrounds divine bodies"³⁴. It is useful to keep this statement in mind for a study of the two representations which cer-

27. They must therefore indeed, with ELDERKIN, *l.c.*, be compared to other celestial carriers employed in Roman art, as Victories or the personifications discussed in my above-cited paper, see n. 8. The mandorla, although it is not a shield, needs carriers like a shield, or like anything that has some weight, because it contains the person of Christ.

28. *l.c.*, 136 ff.

29. Translation as: SHAPIRO, *l.c.*, 136 and n. 5.

30. DEWALD, *l.c.* 300, fig. 12. For date and style of the Codex Egberti, and earlier literature, cf. A. GOLDSCHMIDT, *German Illumination*, 2, 4 ff. The almost identical rendering of the Ascension illustrated in fig. 2, forms part of the Gospels from Poussay which is closely related to the *Codex Egberti*; cf. GOLDSCHMIDT, *l.c.* 10 and pl. 22.

31. SHAPIRO, *l.c.*, 138; cf. n. 15.

32. See *ibid.*, 138 ff.

33. For instance: SERVIUS, in *AEN.* II, 616: "*Nimbo effulgens — nube divina. Est enim fulgidum lumen, quo deorum capita cinguntur. Sic enim pingi solet*".

34. "*Nimbo succincta — id est nubibus, quia praemisit 'agens hiemem': quod nisi esset, splendorem acciperemus, qui est circa corpus deorum*".



FIG. 4. — ABRAHAM AND THE THREE ANGELS. — Mosaic, Rome, Sta. Maria Maggiore. From "Art Studies" 7, 1929, Fig. 136 to p. 72.

tainly are among the earliest examples extant of the mandorla in Christian art, and which occur among the mosaics of St. Maria Maggiore, in Rome³⁵.

One is found in the well-known representation of Abraham receiving the three angels³⁶ (Fig. 4). The middle angel, who is a trifle taller than the two others, is surrounded by a distinct mandorla, in addition to the round halo proper to all three. The mandorla consists of a white oval line with gray and blue colors crossed by oblique rays in the interior. It partially overlaps the two companions, while forming the transparent background of the main figure which, moreover, appears to walk on a reddish ground distinguished from the natural earth supporting the former. In brief, this is a case of the mandorla really being used as an aureole, or to express it with the pagan but more genuinely ancient words of Servius, "the luster that surrounds divine bodies". It here distinguishes the one of the visitors who, in the text, speaks for the others and who alone is addressed by Abraham as "the Lord". There is no actual reference to this phenomenon of light in the words of the story, but the device clearly illustrates the interpretation which an attentive reader may well give to the report, from the very words of the beginning: "*Apparuit autem ei Dominus*". Here the mandorla constitutes an arbitrary addition to the text, however well literary commentators may agree with its

35. For the date of the mosaics, around 435, see recently, BYVANK, *Mnemosyne* 7, 1938, 119; CH. R. MOREY, *Early Christian Art*, 146, and older literature, l.c. 220, n. 309. But cf. also, for the possibility of an earlier date, "Gaz. des B.-Arts", 78, 1936, 65 ff., and R. KRAUTHEIMER, "AJA." 46, 1942, 373 ff, especially 374.

36. *Gen. XVIII*, 1-15. Good details of this mosaic, after WILPERT, in: "Art Studies" 7, 1929, fig. 136, to p. 72. Description in: WILPERT, *Die Römisch. Mosaiken . . .*, 1, 427 ff.; 3, pl. 10; J. P. RICHTER-A. C. TAYLOR, *The Golden Age of Classic Christian Art*, 68 ff. Cf. VAN BERCHEM-E. CLOUZOT, *Mos. Chrétiennes*, 14, fig. 17; MOREY, l.c. 146 f.

use³⁷. At least we should say that the illustration is more outspoken than the text, and that it becomes so by the use of a symbol belonging to the art of the time. Servius would call it a nimbus.

The other mandorla represented in these mosaics offers more difficulties. It occurs in the scene of the people revolting against Moses, to which reference was made previously³⁸ (Fig. 5). The people have clearly grown riotous; they already begin to throw their stones. At the right side one sees the "Tabernacle", an open building with curtains half drawn-up to make the interior visible. In the center Moses and two companions, apparently Joshua and Caleb³⁹, flee before the crowd, and obviously turn to the Tabernacle for safety. But while they run, a mandorla surrounds them. The hand of God appears in the sky above their heads, and the rays here also represented within the mandorla seem to issue from His hand.

According to the moment represented and the recorded text, this mandorla must be expected to illustrate the "glory of the Lord in the Tabernacle"⁴⁰, but it cannot be accepted as a simple illustration of these words. There is a noticeable discrepancy between words and illustrations, and it seems essential that the deviations be recognized. According to the text, this is what happens in V. 10. After the leaders spoke to the people, the crowd in response began shouting and hurling stones against them, and then the "glory of the Lord" appeared. In V. 11 the Lord speaks to Moses — where, we are not told.

If an attempt were made to reconstruct the scene from the mosaic alone, without recourse to the text, it would probably result in a different reading. One sees the leaders, while they flee, protected by the mandorla. The latter, miraculously wrought by the hand of God, seems to move with the persons in it, like an enveloping screen of some physical reality: indeed the last man in the group appears to have just reached the protective enclosure, his right foot still lagging behind and outside of it. At the same time, the stones aimed at the divinely protected do not hit them but fall short, or perhaps bounce off the impenetrable mandorla⁴¹.

The most likely explanation of this difference is that here, too, the representation not merely illustrates, but also comments on the text. Differing from the Abraham episode, where the mandorla of the angel was a free addition, it refers here to something named in the text. But in an equally free manner, this one makes

37. Particularly the coinciding testimony of Justinus Martyr, discussed by RICHTER-TAYLOR, *l.c.* 71 ff.; see 77 f.: "He who appeared to Abraham under the oak at Mamre is God, sent with two angels" . . . Cf. MOREY, *l.c.* 150.

38. The text illustrated is Num. XIV, 10; cf. above, n. 6. Good reproductions, after: WILPERT, *Die R. Mos. l.c.*, 3, pl. 21, in: "Art Studies", *l.c.* fig. 141, to p. 74. Description: WILPERT, *l.c.* 1, 460 f.; RICHTER-TAYLOR, *l.c.* 202 ff. See also: VAN BERCHEM-CLOUZOT, *l.c.* 34, fig. 38; MOREY, *l.c.* 148.

39. Characterized by military dress; cf. VAN BERCHEM-CLOUZOT, *l.c.* 35. These details seem reliable; elsewhere, the preservation of the mosaic is not equally good. RICHTER-TAYLOR, *l.c.* 203, enumerate the restorations. The group of the people must be studied with caution in this respect; the "Tabernacle", the clouds above and the hand of God "seem to have been restored in the Middle Ages." Nevertheless it is possible that they were restored on the basis of older, genuine traces.

40. Num. XIV, 10: "*Gloria Domini super tectum foederis*". Cf. MOREY, *l.c.*

41. Cf. the description in: VAN BERCHEM-CLOUZOT, *l.c.* 35, and RICHTER-TAYLOR, *l.c.* 204 f.

us understand what the artist thought of the "glory" mentioned in the text and what effects he ascribed to it. These effects constitute especially a piece of imaginative interpretation on his part, or on the part of the tradition which he followed. From the text, the reader might conclude that the appearance of the glory arrested the irate crowd. But nowhere is it said to have come to the physical rescue of the attacked men, as the mandorla issuing from the hand of God here does. However, before one asks how so unexpected a version could be given to the facts reported, it is necessary to make a few obvious statements regarding the mandorla which, in



FIG. 5. — THE REVOLT OF THE PEOPLE AGAINST MOSES. — Mosaic, Rome, Sta. Maria Maggiore.
From "Art Studies" 7, 1929, Fig. 141 to p. 74.

this mosaic, has conspicuous peculiarities. First, it cannot denote an aureole, in the sense of a light emanating from one person. On the contrary, the mandorla here surrounds three persons; it is of heavenly origin as is the "glory" mentioned in the text, and apparently constitutes an object independent from the persons which it covers. Further, it must possess some substance more material than sheer light, since stones do not pierce it. In general, there is much in the qualities here deduced from the representation which reminds us of the devices used to illustrate the cloud in the Ascension of Christ. This mandorla, too, might be called a cloud. It seems filled with air inside — but is it by accident only that it has a dark outline, contrary to the light that surrounds the angel in the Abraham scene? Of course, this not an ordinary cloud; natural clouds are differently represented. But in the terminology

of Servius, this also might be called a nimbus; only we would then use the word in its fundamental meaning of cloud rather than aureole, as Servius saw himself forced to do in the above-quoted passage⁴². Eventually we are led to this conclusion: the discrepancy of meaning which Servius observed concerning the term "nimbus" apparently recurs with regard to the mandorla in early Christian art. As early as in the mosaics of St. Maria Maggiore, the mandorla appears in two different significances, almost exclusive of each other⁴³. In one instance it represents an aureole, the light cloud of divine appearance, and in the second a veiling cloud of miraculous protection — or should we say invisibility?

* * *

It may not be possible yet to answer this last question with certainty. Even so, the examples studied show that the early Christian mandorle carry fairly distinct meanings, but not one uniform meaning. We found as possible significance: an aureole, the cloud in the Ascension of Christ, a cloud of divine protection.

What can be the root, or roots, of these varying concepts? Plainly, their origin lies in part outside of the Christian area proper. In other words, the early Christian mandorla, at least in certain cases, constitutes an attempt at illustrating religious conceptions which date from older times.

Thus, in the mosaic which portrays the attempted stoning of Moses, according to Numbers XIV, 10, the unknown artist offers a quite remarkable contribution to one of the crucial issues of Old Testament exegesis. He had to illustrate a phenomenon⁴⁴ the nature of which cannot be easily determined from the Old Testament, even though it is not infrequently mentioned. "Gloria" is merely the standard translation used in the Latin Vulgata⁴⁵. A discussion of this difficult term would be beyond our competence. But leaving aside its abstract significance, adequately rendered by translations like "glory"⁴⁶, it is obvious that in places such as this one the word denotes a visual revelation of the Lord and, therefore, something sufficiently concrete to be seen by human eyes⁴⁷. If statements concerning its visible qualities are made at all in the old texts, the presence of light or fire is often stressed⁴⁸.

42. Servius, to Aen. X, 634; see: above, n. 34.

43. Cf. F. VAN DER MEER, *l.c.* 265, "*cadre tantôt protecteur, tantôt isolateur*". WILPERT's remarks, *Die Röm. Mos.* 1, 98, on the Moses-Scene of St. Maria Maggiore, and *l.c.* 100, on the mandorla carried by angels, point to the same discrepancy. His suggestion that in the former case it is the mere light which the "*drei Gestalten schützend umgibt*", however begs the whole question.

44. See: above, n. 40.

45. Based on the generally used, but also not in every case truly equivalent, Greek translation δόξα. The underlying Hebrew term is *Kābōd*. For this and the following remarks see especially: H. KITTEL, *Die Herrlichkeit Gottes*, Beiheft. Zfneutest. Wiss., 1934, 33 ff, 135 ff.

46. KITTEL, *l.c.* 34.

47. KITTEL, *l.c.* 41.

48. A catalog of relevant quotations in: KITTEL, *l.c.* 136 ff. Influence of the Iranian light-religion is probable. Cf. F. REITZENSTEIN, *Hellenist. Mysterienreligionen*², 355 and 359 f. But the nucleus of the Hebrew concept seems to be older, KITTEL, *l.c.* 163 and n. 1. Nor is "light" the only element in it. The component "cloud" is equally important: cf. besides *Exod.* XXIV, 15 ff, the report III Reg. VIII, 10 f, and the visions of Ezechiel, I, 4.

In another report, *Exodus* XXIV, 15-18, a cloud hovers on Mount Sinai: "the glory of the Lord dwelled over Sinai, and covered it with the cloud". A voice speaks from within the cloud, the "sight of the glory" appears like burning fire on the top of the mountain, and Moses "enters in the midst of the cloud". This was the nature of the "glory" which to the revolting



FIG. 6. — THE PSALMIST IN THE MANDORLA. — Utrecht Psalter, Detail.
From E. Dewald, *The U.P.*, pl. 16.

people appeared above the sanctuary and which the mosaicist of St. Maria Maggiore tried to render in the shape of a mandorla. He could hardly have done so without some knowledge, perhaps derived from older sources, of the genuine biblical significance of the phenomenon.

Early Christian examples representing this particular function of the mandorla can indeed be found. Here one may point to the well-known mural from the catacomb of Callistus, where a boat in deadly danger with a man praying in it is shown^{48a}. As in many other representations, divine intervention is indicated by the hand of God reaching out of the clouds. But while in most instances the symbolical hand issues from a heap of clouds naturally portrayed, in this case the bust of God is seen within a circular mandorla painted red: cloud and fire, shown in one symbol, make the divine appearance manifest.

* * *

However, in the mosaic of Sta. Maria Maggiore the mandorla not only symbolizes the appearance which the people saw, but by way of a quite freely added interpretation it becomes an instrument of rescue for Moses and his companions. This other significance attributed to the mandorla remains yet to be explained. Not only does it transcend the factual content of the text, but it also seems to ascribe a novel effect to the "glory" materialized in the mandorla. The specific interpretation may here be due to the predilection for scenes of divine salvation, so dear to

^{48a}. "Sakraments Kapelle" A³. Probable date, II Century; see: WILPERT, *Erlebnisse u. Ergebnisse*, . . ., 77 ff. For a similar representation, Byzantine, XI Century, cf: K. WEITZMANN, *Byzant. Buchmalerei*, 26 and fig. 199; the prophet Jeremiah points to Christ, whose bust appears in a circular cloud in the right upper corner of the composition.



FIG. 7. — POSEIDON AND AMYONE. — Greek vase painting. — From Armento; later National Museum, Naples. From "JdI". 27, 1912, 284. Fig. 11.

early Christian art; but how the mandorla becomes instrumental in this way is another problem. The old biblical idea to which the text refers hardly justifies this version⁴⁹.

It must be assumed that the mandorla here is not simply the equivalent of the concept which it visualizes, but instead is a symbol of similar, though not identical significance. It, too, is some-

thing like a translation. In order to understand this fact, one has merely to reconstruct the task imposed on the artist. He or his unknown predecessor, in order to illustrate the scene in question, had to express pictorially a patently supernatural phenomenon which is often mentioned in the Old Testament but hardly ever described in sufficient detail. The artist therefore selected for the purpose a representational device which he deemed, and not without good reason, came close to the prescribed idea. But he did not invent it. This device was familiar to him from other sources, which markedly tinged his own understanding of the biblical event he had to illustrate. Intrinsically, the idea of a protective mandorla seems to be at home in pagan classical, rather than in biblical, lore. I think it can be shown that even the representational form of it was previously established in Greek art.

That gods protect mortals by miraculous clouds which make them invisible is an old Greek and fundamentally a Homeric idea, so familiar that a discussion of single examples is not required here⁵⁰. It is in the sense of this popular Greek belief that the rescue of Moses and his companions was interpreted in the mosaic of St. Maria Maggiore. The case was not unique. Josephus, for instance, enlarged another biblical report in the same arbitrary way. He described "a mist as thrown by God"⁵¹ as the reason that the Syrians could not see the prophet Elisha who was thus protected. In the text, Elisha merely prays that his enemies may be smitten

49. The *Kābōd* contains the power and, originally, the person of Jahwe; but it is seldom said to offer protection. For. Js. IV, 6, see: KITTEL *l.c.* 152: The *Kābōd* will give shadow against heat and protection from storm and rain. But the passage is characterized as a late interpolation.

50. A rich catalog of pertinent examples was collected by A. STANLEY PEASE, who recently dealt with *Some aspects of invisibility*, "Harvard Studies in Classical Philology", 53, 1942; especially pp. 8 ff.

51. PEASE, *l.c.* 9 f., with references. Similar, the influence of Philo on early Christian exegesis; literature quoted by: J. QUASTEN, "Byzantion", 15, 1940-41, 3, n. 12.

with blindness; and so they were, miraculously. Again, the protective cloud is not mentioned and constitutes the *interpretatio Graeca*, in this case, of Josephus.

Comparable phenomena are found in Greek art. The well-known vase painting by Python in the British Museum shows Alcmene about to die on the pyre⁵². But Zeus comes to her rescue with thunder and rain, and servant goddesses, the Hyades, pour water upon the fire. Moreover, a cloud filled with fine, silvery drops of rain covers Alcmene, who sits in it as in a cave seen in section. This is a very curious representation. The cloud can be said to have a clear physical function: water quenches fire. At the same time, it is an obvious "cloud of protection"⁵³. The device is outlined in a manner vaguely reminiscent of a rainbow, but the rendition is symbolical rather than naturalistic. It characterizes the splendor of the apparition. The form is approximately oval, as far as it becomes visible, and in the sense of the term here under discussion, I should not hesitate to call it a mandorla (Fig. 8).

Another vase painting from South Italy, once in the Museum of Naples, depicts the love of Poseidon and Amymone⁵⁴ (Fig. 7). In a hilly landscape, near the well that is soon to flow again, the two lovers sit side by side. Unseen, they dwell in the shade of a most miraculous vault. Its irregularly rounded outlines rest on the ground, and all around it rays of the shape common in south Italian art depict its splendor. This is not merely a natural object, but a celestial cloud devised to hide a divine couple. As to its substance, it is of the same kind as the golden cloud in Homer, under the cover of which Zeus and Hera united on Mount Ida⁵⁵. As to its representational form, it must clearly be noted as another Greek pre-form of the mandorla.

* * *

To sum up the case, the mandorla seems to have come into early Christian art by way of the Old Testament illustrations. Primarily, it is the Grecizing rendition in art of the *Kābōd*: its fundamental meaning is to represent the "glory of the Lord" in the form of a cloud⁵⁶. But in Old Testament literature the tendency is already palpable to lay a special stress on the visionary element of light as a

52. Python, Greek vase-painter, perhaps from Paestum, second half of the IV Century B.C.; see: THIEME-BECKER, *Künstler-Lexikon*, 27, 485, s.v. The bell-*krater* in the British Mus.: FURTWÄNGLER-REICHOLD, *Gr. Vasenm.* 3, 57 ff; cf. the earlier literature in A. B. COOK, *Zeus*, 3, 510 f., and illustration, pl. 41.

53. In Greek legends such as this, the cloud itself may be a symbol of miraculous salvation. Thus Phrixos is saved from the altar by his mother, Nephele, who merely is a personified cloud and whose name, in some instances, is by latin writers simply translated as "*Nubes*". *Hygin. poet. Astr.* 2, 20, quoted in: ROSCHER, *ML* 3, 2461, s.v. *Phrixos*.

54. Rf. *pelike* from Armento, first half, IV Century, B.C. Earlier literature in "JdI." 27, 1912, 286; drawing, *l.c.* 284, fig. 11. Add the detailed description in: J. OVERBECK, *Kunstmythologie*, 2, 386 ff.

55. A bridal grotto formed by waves was seen in a painting described by PHILOSTRATOS, *Jm.* I. 8; against Overbeck, *l.c.*, we cannot here recognize a representation of water. But some miraculous cubicle seems, in popular fancy, to have formed part of the story; and Poseidon commands clouds, as well as waves. — *Zeus and Hera on Mount Ida*: *Il.* XIV, 341 ff.

56. Cf. F. VAN DER MEER, *l.c.* 264. The light phenomena of the theophanies in Christian art: luminous clouds, nimbus and mandorla, merely express the same basic idea in different forms.

property of the divine revelation⁵⁷. Accordingly, the mandorla may from early times, as with the angel of the Abraham mosaic in St. Maria Maggiore, represent a cloud of light encircling the divine appearance or, perhaps, the light may emanate from the figure thus exalted⁵⁸.

At the same time, from its Greek origin as a representational scheme, the early Christian mandorla in other cases carries the significance of a protective cloud. In Greek mythology, while gods sometimes manifest themselves through sudden and dazzling light⁵⁹, the idea is current of miraculous clouds or mists in which a person, divine or mortal, may be protected, become invisible, or disappear. From this double descendancy results the ambivalence of meaning found with the mandorle of St. Maria Maggiore, as luminous clouds indicating divine revelation or divine protection, perhaps through sudden disappearance. This ambivalence of meaning in the mandorla has much in common with contemporary language regarding the term "nimbus".

* * *

Where the mandorla is introduced into illustrations of the New Testament, it seems that the usage generally follows the tradition established with the themes of the Old. Particularly indicative of this fact is the iconography of two scenes from the life of Christ: the Transfiguration and the Ascension. In the former, Moses and Elias, according to Luke, speak to Christ; they appear "in maiestate"⁶⁰. Then in the following verse the three disciples, awakening, beheld "maiestatem eius" and the two men beside him. The Greek word used is "δόξα" which, in turn, can be considered as the New Testament equivalent of Hebrew *Kābōd*⁶¹. Evidently when Christian art undertakes the representation of this scene⁶², the mandorla is used, in this case, to illustrate the "δόξα" of the Greek text. However, the selection for this purpose of the mandorla has both logic and language in its favor. Whether or not the artists were aware of the fact that the Greek expression in the text verbally refers to the familiar concept of Old Testament religion, at any rate they used the same symbol for both. Not even in this context does the mandorla seem to represent primarily a phenomenon of light. For instance, in the mosaic from the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai — one of the oldest

57. S. KITTEL, *l.c.* 148 ff. Consequently, the presence of fire is often emphasized even in descriptions which clearly mean the carrying cloud. This is the case of Palladius' vision, quoted by: WILPERT, D. R. Mos. I, 100.

58. In the developed concept of the aureole as an emanation of divine light and power, Iranian elements apparently have a decisive part: cf. KITTEL, *l.c.* 150; REITZENSTEIN, *l.c.* 359 f., where, in an Iranian scripture the aureole, αὔρα τοῦ φωτός, is defined as the image of the Persian "divine glory", the *Hvareno*. The round halo, although it originated independently in Greek Art, can also be used to render the Persian *Hvareno*. See: RAMSDEN, in: "Burl. Mag.", 78, 1941, 123 ff.

59. PEASE, *l.c.* 2; cf. PFISTER in: "PW.", Suppl. IV, 315, s.v. *Epiphanie*.

60. LC. IX, 31-32.

61. See: KITTEL, *l.c.* 190. For imitations of the transfiguration in later Christian literature, see: PEASE, *l.c.* 27.

62. For the early iconography of the transfiguration, see: DALTON, *Byzantine Art . . .*, 655. Cf. DE WAAL, "RQS." 1902, 25 ff., especially with regard to the symbolical representation in the apse of S. Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna.

renditions known of the Transfiguration — the mandorla shows the blue color of air or of the celestial cloud which early Christian art often ascribed to it⁶³. The light in which the disciples see Christ transfigured is illustrated by beams radiating from his body.



FIG. 8. — PYTHON. — Alcmena on the Pyre, Greek vase painting. — British Museum. London.
From "JHST". 11, 1890, pl. 6.

The case of the Ascension is different in one respect. What the artist had to illustrate in this scene was a cloud expressly so named. Nothing in the text seems

63. For brief description and date, VI C., see: DALTON *l.c.*, 383 and fig. 225. Blue color of the mandorla: see remarks of ELDERKIN, "AJA." 42, 1938, 236. Add the blue mandorla of Christ judging the world in: *Cosmas Indicopleustis*, and other instances; cf. A. VENTURI, *Storia della pittura . . .*, I, 352, and fig. 145.

to demand a rendering of the cloud other than as a more or less natural form. Indeed the portrayal of this detail was disputed, because we find it rendered differently in the various representational types of the scene. In the end, the mandorla prevailed. But much later still this solution of the old representational problem might be challenged, as proved by the more or less episodic innovations introduced into the iconography of the Ascension by Ottonian and early English illuminations.

For to represent the cloud in the Ascension of Christ as a mandorla again implied an act of free interpretation rather than of simple illustration of the text. Two reasons may have particularly recommended this interpretation. First, the miraculous cloud called "nimbus" was in ancient thinking a familiar instrument of ascension. Livy's report of Romulus mysteriously carried out of sight of the Romans by a dense cloud has previously been cited by others in this connection⁶⁴. Second, interpreters who understood the cloud in the Ascension of Christ in terms of the Old Testament were thus again led to identify it with the *Kābōd*. By far the most impressive and most detailed description of the latter is found in the vision of Ezechiel⁶⁵. The fact has often been noticed that the first representations in which the cloud of Christ's Ascension is symbolically indicated in form of a mandorla, at the same time refer to this particular Old Testament description. The cloud of Ascension is thus silently but effectively equated to the "glory" envisaged by Old Testament prophecy. It is characteristic of the arbitrariness of this assimilation that in the earlier works of art following it, the mandorla is often carried by a celestial chariot and winged animals similar to those envisaged by Ezechiel⁶⁶. Yet none of these details is mentioned, nor any allusion made to them in the textual reports of the event. The identity of the vehicle of Christ's Ascension with the luminous cloud, carried by the wings, wheels and animals of the famous vision, is professed unmistakably by the pictures alone⁶⁷. Accordingly, the disturbing similarity in these compositions between the mandorla of the Ascension and the vision of Ezechiel must be acknowledged as another obvious case of pictorial text-interpretation.

In spite of the fact that neither Transfiguration nor Ascension were among the oldest Christological representations in art, they became decisive for the later Byzantine and medieval use of the mandorla as an artistic symbol. We need not in this study follow further its evolution and the ramifications of its meaning. However, the significance established later, as a throne of clouds or floating cloud of

64. LIVIUS I, 16: a storm "*tam denso regem operuit nimbo, ut conspectum eius contioni abstulerit*". Cf. PEASE, *l.c.* 15 f.

65. Especially Ezech. I, 4 ff. Cf. KITTEL *l.c.*, 143 ff. For the identity of cloud and "glory" in the report of the Ascension, see also: R. B. RACKHAM, *The Acts . . .*, (Oxford commentaries), 8.

66. Of course, the representation is not complete; the literary vision is richer and more obscure of detail. Bawit, Chapel XVII, shows most of these elements combined; see: DEWALD, "AJA." 1915, 288 f. Rabula, cf. *l.c.* 281, has the flying apparatus, but Christ is standing; while the Monza phials are more independent, and of the vision retain nothing but the throne in the mandorla. For Rabula cf. also: VAN DER MEER, *l.c.* 257 ff.

67. See lately: MOREY, *l.c.*, 88 f., 122.

light that carries the celestial appearance of Christ, proved the most lasting. Eventually, the mandorla became a visible sign of celestial exaltation, of Christ primarily, such as the device is generally known in medieval art. From the symbolical illustration of the Ascension of Christ proceeded the liturgical and apocalyptic representation of the medieval theophany⁶⁸.

A similar systematization can be observed in the form of the mandorla. The luminous clouds of ancient art apparently were quite irregularly shaped, and in the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore, the outline of the mandorla is still easily enough adapted to any object which it is supposed to surround. In this early stage the mandorla is not yet bound to a regular form. It is, therefore, not likely that the regular forms in which the mandorla becomes later standardized, contributed much to its meaning. The circular outline seems a proper form to circumscribe a seated figure⁶⁹; the oval is no less natural for the circumscription of a standing one.

Identical forms can indeed be found in contemporary ornament, where they are purely decorative and certainly have no meaning. Thus in the spandrels of the Baptistry of San Giovanni in Fonte, Ravenna, the vines surround standing figures with something like an oval halo⁷⁰. In a Roman decorative relief from Palestine, vines form a cave around the figure of Pan in a manner that could well be called a pointed mandorla⁷¹.

One more remark remains to be made. While a new standard of form and meaning is thus established for the mandorla, which lasted through the middle ages, the earlier and often more original as well as more precise interpretations seem to fall into oblivion. They are not entirely forgotten, however, and may at much later times come to light in single places, especially in manuscripts. The Utrecht Psalter offers an interesting example among the Illustrations of Psalm XIX. There, surprisingly, the Psalmist himself is seen within a mandorla⁷² (Fig. 6). Most likely the representation refers to the words in Verse 13: "*et ab alienis parce seruo tuo*". The "aliens" form a group behind the Psalmist whose royal costume may indicate, to follow the text further, that his integrity has not been violated and he is "not dominated" by them. The Mandorla can in this case neither denote an aureole of light for which there is no cause, nor the floating veil of celestial appearance. Indeed the very fact that the Psalmist is himself encircled by it seems unusual if not inconsistent with the usage and concepts of the time. The explanation here suggested is that in this representation the mandorla has the same meaning as in the mosaic of Santa Maria Maggiore, where it miraculously defended

68. Cf. VAN DER MEER, *l.c.* 259 ff.

69. Thus VAN DER MEER, *l.c.* 265.

70. VENTURI, *l.c.* I, 283, and figs. 116-117.

71. Decorative relief from Ascalon, period of the Roman empire; "QDAP." 3, 1933, pl. 67.

72. E. DEWALD, *The Utrecht Psalter*, 12 and pl. 16, previously defined this mandorla as "perhaps a protection". The explanation seems correct and, I think, is further confirmed by the above materials. An early Christian prototype must be presumed; cf. for the artistic sources of the Utrecht Psalter: D. TSELOS, "Art Bull." 13, 1931, I ff.; D. Panofsky, *l.c.* 25, 1943, 50 ff.

Moses and his followers. The drawing in the Utrecht Psalter only revives the old interpretation of the mandorla, which we then called the Grecizing, and which has become rare in the meantime — rare, but not extinct: recalling the varying shades of meaning which from antiquity were assembled in this form, it is not difficult to understand why the simple oval around the figure here also symbolizes the protection of God.

OTTO BRENDEL.





A SELF-PORTRAIT BY THE YOUNG RUBENS

THE production of van Dyck in his youth has more than once furnished the subject of erudite studies: we know some hundred pictures executed by the young artist prior to his departure, in 1620, for England and thence Italy. The contrary applies in the case of Rubens: the work of his youth is not known to us. Such pictures, nevertheless, must exist. Even if one grants that he was no prodigy such as van Dyck in his adolescence, it will be conceded that the artist Rubens, who began to devote himself exclusively to the profession of painting at the age of fourteen, must have produced some pictures of a certain worth during his youth, particularly in the two years spent at Antwerp, after obtaining his mastership in 1598 and before leaving for Italy in 1600. If modern scholars have been able to make only rare hypotheses on the subject, this, I believe, is because their point of departure has been erroneous. Following the current tradition of the erudites of art they have started with the principle: artists follow at their debut the manner of their masters. This principle is not always applicable, particularly

in the case of real artists who are essentially creators. They will react to the instruction and example of their masters in a personal manner, such reaction being at times a veritable opposition and the greatest profit they derive from the proffered example is the assertion of their own personality. Research for the pictures of Rubens wherein he might have imitated his masters Tobias Verhaecht, Adam van Noort and Otto van Veen is found to produce negative or vague results. A study of the artist's spirit can in this respect give more positive results.

In the case of Rubens there is furthermore a serious difficulty to compose the works of his early years: points of comparison are necessary, and where are the signed or duly authenticated works by Rubens dating earlier than 1600?

The unique picture of this category presently known¹ is the *Portrait of a Young Mechanic* (copper, 20.5 cm. x 40 cm.) in the Henry Blank Collection at Newark, New Jersey. It was studied and reproduced in the "Münchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst" prior to the last war by R. Oldenbourg, who presented it as the one work which we can reasonably consider as a portrait by Rubens before 1615 — probably before 1610. The little picture has subsequently been cleaned, revealing the painted date "A.MDLXXXVII. Aetat. XXVI". On the back "*Petrus Paulus Rubens Pi.*" is engraved into the copper².

I am doubtful of the reliability of this attribution. An inscription traced in majuscule letters on the copper and on the back is not a real signature. And I do not see in this miniature portrait anything of the vigor one expects in Rubens as known to us through his work. I should hardly believe that this artist would have painted in so insipid a manner in 1597 when three or four years later, in Italy, he executed works in which a very personal spirit is at once manifest: the miracle of Italian influence, which there is so often unduly spoken of, could not have thus unfolded the spirit of Rubens. The *Portrait of a Young Mechanic* does not surpass in merit the miniatures which a quantity of artists of second rank were then executing on copper. The make up is feeble; the personage is squeezed into the frame; the body, the neck and head are conceived in the same plane; the modelling is done in a timid manner; the technique is meticulous and the expression of the face without spirit. Only the right hand, with the foreshortened fingers, is not by an indifferent artist — but how many Flemish portraitists in the middle of the XVI century were already executing little masterpieces with such hands!

I should like to here note the existence of another miniature, the *Portrait of a Page* (copper, about 12.5 cm. x 10 cm.) which represents an adolescent, seen in half length, turned three quarters to the right and clad in a grey costume embroidered in red. An XVIII century inscription which I have seen on the back says that it is the

1. I have not been able to trace the *Portrait of a Man*, which is said to be dated 1599, of the collection of the Duc de Leuchtenberg of Berlin, cited by M. ROOSES, *L'Oeuvre de Rubens*, no. 112. It appeared in the Lepke sale, Berlin, March 28, 1935, no. 25. This could be the picture known as the *Portrait of Rubens* also said to be dated 1599 and which figured in the Thiernann sale, Köln, May 20, 1867, no. 303.

2. This is noted by W. BODE, editor of the collection of articles by R. OLDENBOURG, *P. P. Rubens*, Berlin, 1922.



FIG. 1. — P. P. RUBENS. — A Self-portrait by the young Rubens. — Johnson Collection, Philadelphia.



FIG. 2. — P. P. RUBENS. — A Self-portrait by the young Rubens, detail (see Fig. 1). — Johnson Collection, Philadelphia.

to secure a reproduction of this little picture, I shall not discuss it further.

But here is something to make connoisseurs ponder. The rich Johnson Collection at Philadelphia owns a *Portrait of a Young Painter* (canvas, 77 cm. x 61 cm.) for a long time attributed to Pedro Orrente and incorporated in the Spanish section of the catalogue (Fig. 1). When I confronted the picture I expressed my first impression: "But this is a Rubens!" After reflection and closer examination this impression has persisted. The large facility of the presentation and the open physiognomy attest the spirit of this artist. The light colours, the heavy colour layer, the manner of modelling are all such as we encounter in the oldest known works done by him in Flanders (Fig. 2). One is accustomed to date these works between 1610 and 1614, after his return to his native land, but many could well have been executed before his departure for England. I mention here only the *Bust of a Martyr* at the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo³, and the *Two Fathers of the Church* in the

portrait of Rubens at the age of fifteen. The picture belongs to the Count de Lalaing of Brussels, who told me that family tradition records the picture as a gift offered by the young Rubens to Marguerite de Ligne, Countess de Lalaing, with whom Rubens was first placed as a page of the château d'Eccaussines Lalaing. It is quite natural that the young artist, after learning his craft sufficiently, made this gift to his protectress. Since it is impossible at the present moment

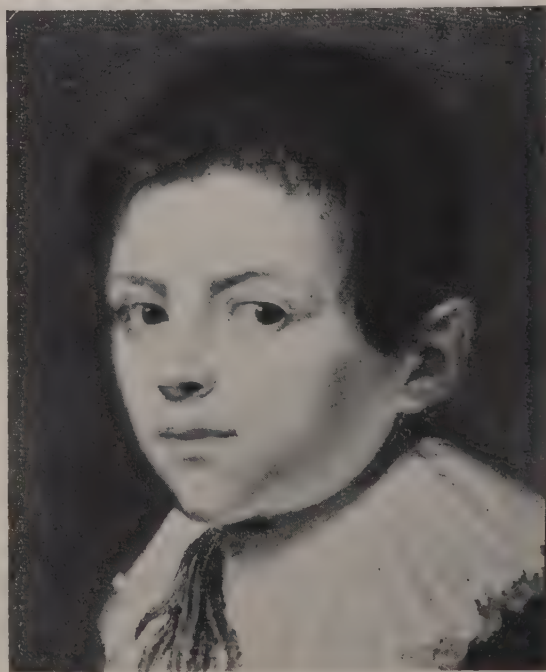


FIG. 3. — P. P. RUBENS. — A Self-portrait by the young Rubens, detail (see Fig. 1). — Johnson Collection, Philadelphia.

in Flanders (Fig. 2). One is accustomed to date these works between 1610 and 1614, after his return to his native land, but many could well have been executed before his departure for England. I mention here only the *Bust of a Martyr* at the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo³, and the *Two Fathers of the Church* in the

3. Repr. in: R. OLDENBOURG, *P. P. Rubens*, 1922, p. 49.

Detroit Institute of Art⁴.

The Philadelphia portrait has characteristics in common with these pictures. I call attention especially to the thick paint smoothed on with a sable brush. In the flesh colours the yellows and reds are well mixed, the cheeks are rounded in shades of yellow, red in the first shadows, cold blue in the second shadows and a transparent brown in what I shall call the deep shadows. In the brown shadows the ear emerges by means of reddish tones. The brush work presents two characteristics. The first is that which Cornelis de Vos, that excellent Flemish portrait painter, applied several years later so skillfully: the indication of the separation of the

hair and forehead by painting the hair in delicate strokes into the light, still wet ground of the forehead (Fig. 3). The second peculiarity is the technique of the eyes. The large eyeballs are encircled by thick eyelids which are executed by even brush strokes of heavy and light matter mixed with a little cinnabar. This identical method is to be found in the *Portrait of Vincenzo Gonzaga*⁵ which Dr. Glück so happily recognized as part of another picture by Rubens and was able to acquire for the Vienna Museum. Comparison of these two works from the point of view of spirit conception and execution should persuade the reader to accept the attribution of the Philadelphia picture to Rubens. Here is to be found the same open look of the adolescent and the notes of red at the nostrils and lips to render the painting more vivacious. It goes without saying that one must accept several differences in



FIG. 4. — P. P. RUBENS. — Self-portrait. — Royal Collection, Windsor Castle. With the kind permission of His Majesty the King.

4. Repr. in: "Parnassus", April 1933.

5. Repr. in: *Rubens, (Klassiker der Kunst)*, p. 16.



FIG. 5. — P. P. RUBENS. — Rubens and Isabella Brandt, Detail. — Collection of Baron Edouard de Rothschild.

the coloring: in the Vienna picture, painted in Italy in 1605, the reddish bolus appears beneath the flesh color and the costume of the young prince demands a gamut of tonality richer than that of a young artist of the North. By the way, if this *Portrait of a Young Painter* is a work by Rubens before his departure for Italy, the *Portrait of a Young Mechanic*, dated 1597, certainly cannot have been executed by him.

But there is a further consideration. Could not this *Portrait of a Young Painter* be the portrait of Rubens at about fifteen years of age?

Let us examine and compare it with portraits which Rubens painted of himself. Unfortunately the oldest portraits which the artist did of himself show us Rubens already as a completely mature man. Let us see, however, whether we can find an identity of features. We shall not make use of the two most beautiful self portraits by Rubens: those of the Uffizi and Windsor Castle. These are state portraits and we know how artists loved to flatter their models upon such occasion even when seeing the model in a mirror. We know also by the retouchings which Rubens made on the different states of the engraving by Paul Pontius, who had to fix his image in the memory of man, that Rubens tried to hide his premature baldness by exaggerating the hair under the edge of his hat. Nor shall we pause to consider the beautiful drawing in the Albertina made for the engraver. Here also the artist is flattered: he has elongated the oval of his face. Let us mention simply that in all of these portraits we observe that the nose, which projects strongly on the face, turns up a little at the tip, that the lower lip is heavy and that the large eyeball fills the corner of the eye. This also shows in the face of the adolescent.

A preliminary drawing, probably for that of the Albertina, and otherwise sincere and expressive, is in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle⁶ (Fig. 4). This is the real portrait of the artist from life, after which he later stylized. Here nothing is hidden: neither the bags beneath the eyes, the puffiness under the chin, the somewhat coarse nose, nor the round form of the face. But how much more profoundly human is this drawing than the beautifully stylized one of the Albertina! And now,

6. LEO VAN PUYVELDE, *Flemish Drawings at Windsor Castle*, London, 1942, no. 281.

is not this man the adolescent of the picture in Philadelphia, after he has enjoyed and suffered life?

We note the same principal facial traits in the pictures destined for the intimacy of his house: the *Portrait of Rubens with Hélène Fourment in their Garden*, in the Pinakothek at Munich, painted in 1631, and the same construction of head



FIG. 6. — P. P. RUBENS. — Rubens and Helene Fourment with Their First Child, Detail. — Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

and face in the *Portrait of Rubens with Hélène Fourment and their First Child*, in the collection of Baron Edouard de Rothschild, Paris, (Fig. 6) executed in 1632. It is this same truthful Rubens who is depicted in the beautiful *Portrait of Rubens* which he painted at the end of his life for his wife, and which is now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

Let us now consider portraits wherein Rubens portrays himself at a less advanced age, and we shall notice a physiognomy closer to that of the adolescent boy of the Philadelphia picture. I recall the *Portrait of Rubens with Justus Lipsius, Philippe Rubens and Woverius* in the Pitti, the style of which places it no earlier than 1614; and particularly the little known *Portrait of Rubens* which entered the Antwerp Museum a few years ago and which I consider an authentic work. The style of this latter portrait places it toward 1610; it is executed in the same manner as the *Adoration of the Magi* in the Museum of Groningen, formerly in the collection of Hofstede de Groot, and a model-sketch for the *Adoration of the Magi* at Madrid, which was delivered to the magistrate of Antwerp in 1609. The Antwerp portrait shows the same rounded head, the same nose slightly raised at the tip, the same nostrils and the same mouth as the Philadelphia picture. At this time Rubens also portrayed himself in the *Portrait of Rubens and Isabella Brant*, in the Pinakothek at Munich (Fig. 5), a marriage picture, in which he represents himself at his best but with the identity of features again apparent.

Finally I would refer to the *Portrait of Rubens and his Roman Friends* in the collection of Eugene Abresch in Neustadt⁷. In this picture of about 1603, the main features are even closer to those of the boy in Philadelphia. There exists, however, the difference between a mature man and an adolescent. This sort of comparison is

7. Repr. in: K. GERSTENBERG, *Rubens im Kreise seiner Römischen Gefährten*, in: "Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst", 1932, vol. I, p. 101.

always somewhat arbitrary⁸.

Can we conclude that the portrait of the young painter in the Johnson Collection is the portrait of the young Rubens, painted by himself? I should be well inclined to do so. I like to keep a careful reserve in such questions of physiognomical identity. And I wish to finish by reminding that there exists a written proof that Rubens did his own portrait in his youth. In the inventory of the effects left by the painter Abraham Matthys, who died in 1649⁹, there is mentioned: "*Het Contzefeytsel van Ruebens in syn jonckheyt van hem selven gedaen, no. 82.*" (The portrait of Rubens in his youth done by himself, No. 82.)

LEO VAN PUYVELDE



8. I cannot consider as being by Rubens the *Portrait of a Young Man*, which they contend represents the young Rubens, in the A. Falvy Collection, Santa Barbara. I do not consider the *Portrait of a Boy* at the Musée of Montauban as one by Rubens although DR. BREDIUS seems to believe it (Repr. in: *L'Art Flamand et Hollandais*, 1904, vol. II, p. 117). I certainly do not see the hand of Rubens in *The Unfinished Self-portrait by Rubens* published by PHILIP HENDY in: "Parnassus", April 1933, p. 13. And neither can I make the case for the *Portrait of a Young Man* in the Paalen Collection at Rochusberg in Westphalia. This portrait was formerly in the collection of H. Hymans at Brussels and has been said to be the portrait of Rubens. EMILE VERHAEREN published it as such in his book on Rubens but R. OLDENBOURG, who reproduced it (*op. cit.*, p. 139) did not see Rubens in it because the sitter bears a scar on his forehead which Rubens never had.

9. This inventory was published by J. DENUCE, *The Antwerp Art Galleries*, Antwerp, 1932, p. 123.



FRANCISCO DE ZURBARÁN

A STUDY OF HIS STYLE

I

THE Spanish master Francisco de Zurbarán (1598-1664) is not well known in this country and in England. We have preferred Murillo and Ribera, of whom he is at least the equal. He was however, always highly respected in Spain and in Spanish America. His discovery beyond the Pyrenees began during the Napoleonic wars, when the French invaders admired his paintings so much that they carried them off by the dozen from the churches of Seville. Those spoils, together with the paintings which King Louis Philippe was able to acquire during the secularisation of Spanish monasteries in 1837, made it possible for him to open his famous Spanish Gallery at the Louvre in 1838, a sensation for the artistic world of the time. One fifth of over four hundred paintings exhibited there were attributed to Zurbarán. This event brought him forcefully to the attention of the world at large. The Romanticists, however, understood only limited facets of his art, as Théophile Gautier's famous verses show:

*Moines de Zurbaran, blancs chartreux qui, dans l'ombre,
Glissez silencieux sur les dalles des morts,
Murmurant des Pater et des Ave sans nombre,
Quel crime expiez-vous par de si grands remords?*

For almost a century thereafter, he was esteemed mostly as a painter of fierce, repentant monks and of saints dressed as mondaine ladies. More recently the public has begun to appreciate his fanatic striving for a realism which penetrates to the essence of objects and gives them a life of their own, increasing their individual character beyond their mere outward appearance. We have come to admire the rigid and disciplined design of his compositions and the bold application of deep, rich colors, placed side by side at full intensity and surprising contrast, — both design and color being akin to contemporary art. And to-day Zurbarán becomes

*** The *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* living up to its tradition of presenting to its readers scholarly controversial material, does not necessarily agree with all the opinions expressed by the author.

still more important, because those who have gone through the strain of war will understand the sincerity and the virile and devout spirit of his paintings. His painting of strong hands, chiseled, as it were, from stone, moves us no less than the tender faces of his holy figures¹.

It is then appropriate at this time to call attention once more to this powerful master, especially since a critical discussion of his work is also long overdue. Contrary to frequent assertions, the spiritual and pictorial aims of Zurbarán changed as he grew older, and a stylistic analysis is therefore necessary in order to establish an outline of his works in chronological sequence. His accepted oeuvre contains many definitely questionable attributions, including pictures actually done by his pupils and others belonging rather to the Italian school. A new study of his stylistic development leads also to several major changes in the accepted dates of his paintings. In the course of this review, all works attributed to him which are owned in the Americas will be discussed briefly. Of more than fifty paintings given to this master in the United States alone, only thirteen can in my opinion with certainty be so attributed. In the other Americas: one in Argentina, one in Canada, four in Mexico, one in Chile, and fifteen (executed in part by assistants) in Peru. It is hoped that this survey will help others to undertake a thorough reinvestigation of Zurbarán's work, bringing out his qualities as a Baroque painter and as a representative of XVII century monkish Spain.

* * *

Zurbarán was born in the region of Extremadura in 1598². And poor, silent, heroic Extremadura, bordering on the melancholy plains of Portugal, furnishes the key to Zurbarán's art, in spite of the fact that the master spent most of his life at

1. See: A. PALOMINO, *Museo pictórico y escala óptica*, Madrid, 1724, III, pp. 355-56; A. PONZ, *Viaje de España*, Madrid, 1777, vol. IX; J. A. CEÁN BERMÚDEZ, *Diccionario histórico de los más ilustres profesores de las bellas artes en España*, Madrid, 1800, VI, p. 52; CONDE DE LA VIÑAZA, *Adiciones al diccionario de Ceán Bermúdez*, Madrid, 1894, IV, pp. 71-72; S. VINIEGRA, *Catálogo oficial ilustrado de la exposición de las obras de Francisco de Zurbarán*, Madrid, 1905; E. TORMO, *El monasterio de Guadalupe y los cuadros de Zurbarán*, Madrid, 1905, and in: *Enciclopedia Italiana*, 1937, XXXV, p. 1059; J. CASCALES MUÑOZ, *Francisco de Zurbarán*, Madrid, 1911, translated by N. S. EVANS, New York, 1918; S. MONTOTO DE SEDAS, *Zurbarán, nuevos documentos para ilustrar su biografía*, in: "Arte Español", 1920/21, V, pp. 400-4; J. HERNÁNDEZ DÍAZ, *Universidad de Sevilla, Laboratorio de Arte, Documentos para la historia de arte in Andalucía*, Seville, 1928, II, p. 183; C. LÓPEZ MARTÍNEZ, *Retablos y esculturas de traza sevillana*, Seville, 1928, p. 8; idem, *Arquitectos, escultores y pintores vecinos de Sevilla*, Seville, 1928, pp. 25, 215-16; idem, *Desde Martínez Montañés hasta Pedro Roldán*, Seville, 1932, pp. 221-25; E. LAFUENTE FERRARI, *El realismo en la pintura del siglo XVII*, *Historia del Arte Labor*, Barcelona, 1935, XII, pp. 104-10; D. ANGULO IÑIGUEZ, *Universidad de Sevilla, Arte en America y Filipinas*, Seville, 1935, no. 1, pp. 54-58; D. ANGULO IÑIGUEZ, in: "Archivo español de arte", 1941, no. 46, pp. 365-76; MARQUIS OF LOZOYA, *Mercurio Peruano*, January 1942, XXIV, p. 7; in Germany; K. JUSTI, in: "Jahrbuch der Koeniglich preussischen Kunstsammlungen", 1883, IV, pp. 152-62; A. L. MAYER, *Sevillaner Malerschule*, Leipzig, 1911, pp. 147-61; idem, *Pintura española*, Barcelona, 1926, pp. 147-52; idem, *Historia de la pintura española*, Second edition, Madrid, 1942, pp. 328-47; idem, in: "Arts and Decoration", March 1916, VI, pp. 219-22; idem, in: "Burlington Magazine", August 1926, IL, p. 55; idem, in: "Zeitschrift fuer bildende Kunst", 1927/28, LXI, pp. 289-92; idem, in: "Apollo", April 1928, VII, pp. 180-81; H. L. KEHRER, *Francisco de Zurbarán*, Munich, 1918; idem, *Spanische Kunst*, Munich, 1926, pp. 181-222; idem, in: "Zeitschrift fuer bildende Kunst", 1920/21, IV, pp. 248-52; V. VON LOGA, *Malerei in Spanien*, Berlin, 1923, pp. 267-84; in France, T. GAUTIER, *Oeuvres*, Paris, 1890, II, pp. 105, 152; P. LAFOND, *Ribera et Zurbarán*, Paris, 1909; CH. ZERVOS, in: "Cahiers d'Art", 1927, II, pp. 85-92; P. GUINARD, in: "Cahiers de Belgique", September 1931, IV, no. 7, pp. 255-66, (the best appreciation of the artist); idem in *Hommage à Ernest Martinenche*, Paris, 1939, pp. 23-33.

2. His baptismal certificate was published in: CASCALES, *l.c.*, pp. 21-23.

Seville, the opulent capital of Andalusia. Extremadura had produced a Cortés, a Pizarro, an Orellana, and many other intrepid explorers of New Spain, but, in the long history of art, only one other noted painter grew out of her provincial soil. This is Luis de Morales, whom Zurbarán recalls in the carefully exact representation of objects and in the deep religious feeling. It is not certain that, as Palomino says, Zurbarán studied under a son of Morales; we know definitely, however, that at the age of sixteen he was apprenticed³ to the Sevillian "painter of images", Pedro Díaz de Villanueva. Documents of his second marriage⁴ show that from 1624 to 1628 Zurbarán lived at Llerena, Province of Badajoz, a town only a few miles from his birth place, Fuentedecantos. He was,



FIG. 1. — ZURBARÁN. — St. Bonaventure Presiding over a Chapter of the Franciscan Order. — Louvre, Paris. (Braun et Cie).

however, again briefly in Seville in 1626 and 1627 for the work on San Pablo, and documents dated 1626 and 1628 call him: "Citizen of Llerena residing temporarily at Seville."⁵ In September, 1628, he settled permanently at Seville, the immediate reason for this move being a contract to paint a series of St. Peter Nolasco for the Mercedarian Church. Thereafter documents mention him as being in Seville in 1629, 1631, 1634, 1637, 1639, 1640, 1641, 1642, 1644, 1645, 1647, 1648, 1656, 1657, and 1658⁶. Sometime between 1633 and the spring of 1635 he made a trip to Madrid. Although he worked in the later thirties for Llerena, for Arcos and Jerez, Province of Cádiz, and for Guadalupe, Province of Cáceres, it is more likely that these commissions were executed at Seville rather than *in situ*. In the 1640's he sent many paintings to Lima, Peru. He lived at Madrid from 1658 until 1664, probably the year of his death.

Zurbarán arrived in Madrid in May, 1658, according to the deposition he made in favor of Velázquez' reception into the order of Santiago⁷. On January 2, 1662, he writes to the Bishop of Badajoz that he is overloaded with royal commissions and also busy working for Santo Domingo de Atocha,

3. The apprentice contract was found by F. Rodríguez Marín and published by CASCALES, *l.c.*, pp. 197-201.

4. Published by S. MONTOTO DE SEDAS, *l.c.*, p. 403.

5. C. LÓPEZ MARTÍNEZ, *Desde Martínez Montañés*, p. 221.

6. See: CASCALES, *l.c.*, pp. 202, 221; LÓPEZ MARTÍNEZ, *Arquitectos*, pp. 25, 215-16; idem, *Retablos*, p. 8; idem, *Desde Martínez Montañés*, pp. 221-25; HERNÁNDEZ DÍAZ, *Documentos*, II, p. 183; S. MONTOTO DE SEDAS, *l.c.*, pp. 403-04.

7. CASCALES, *l.c.*, p. 59. In 1662 he is mentioned by Díaz del Valle as living in Madrid (see: F. J. SÁNCHEZ CANTÓN, *Fuentes literarias para la historia del arte español*, Madrid, 1933, III, p. 368).

Madrid⁸. He is last heard of in February, 1664, when he and Francisco de Rizi appraise paintings done by Salcedo⁹. It is probable that Zurbarán died in that year, because Palomino (III, p. 356), says that he was sixty-six years old at his death. His first wife Beatriz de Morales, mother of his son, the painter Juan Zurbarán, had died in the spring of 1639, and he had married Leonor de Tordera, a widow, in 1644¹⁰.

Zurbarán may have received some impressions from Morales as a child in his native Fuentedecantos. Vague reminiscences of the Flemish painters of the fifteenth century could have come to him through Nuno de Gonçalves, Frey Carlos, and other artists of that period belonging to the great Portuguese-Flemish school of painting flourishing just across the border. As a boy Zurbarán was undoubtedly influenced by Villanueva and Ruelas, as a young man by Herrera and directly or indirectly by Caravaggio, and later in life first by Ribera, then, after 1650, by Velázquez and especially by Murillo. To his training under Villanueva, the obscure painter of religious statues, Zurbarán may owe the sculptural power of his folds and figures. Until well into his career he considered himself in the first place a "*pintor de imagería*", as he calls himself in the contracts for San Pablo of 1626 and for Santo Tomás of 1631¹¹. The Sevillian guild system divided painters into

four classes: gilders, painters, image painters, and painters of decorative wall cloth. The examination for image painters demanded proficient knowledge of wood sculpture, of preparation of the canvas and colors, of drawing, anatomy, faces, hair, folds, landscape background and foliage, and especially of the draping of cloth around a maniquin, a trick of the trade in which Zurbarán excelled.

Palomino tells us that Zurbarán was the pupil of Ruelas, the first Early Baroque painter in Seville and the first to combine mysticism and naturalism. He had studied in Venice and introduced the art of Titian and of Tintoretto to Seville. His ponderous figures and such domestic detail as the still life of his *St. Ann and the Virgin*, Museum, Seville,

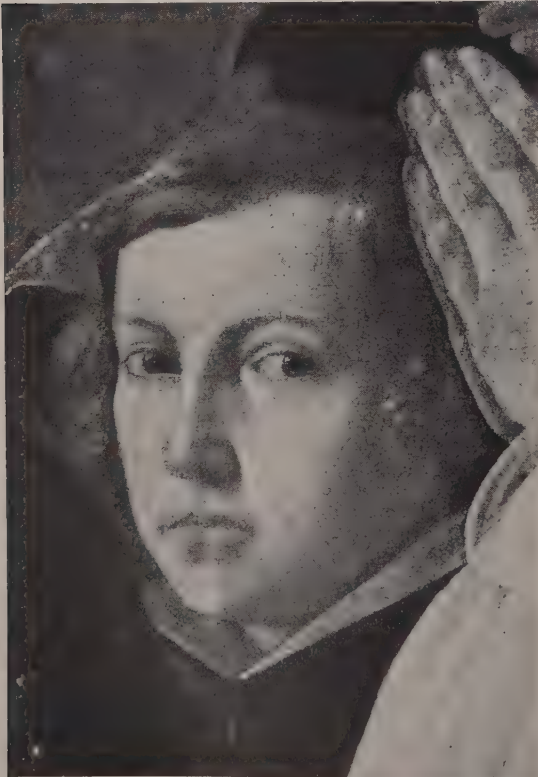


FIG. 2. — ZURBARÁN. — The Legend of the Bell (detail).
— Cincinnati Art Museum. (Gudiol).

8. CASCALES, *España moderna*, 1905, CIIC, pp. 20-31.

9. CASCALES, *l.c.*, p. 223.

10. See: GESTOSO PÉREZ, *Ensayo de un diccionario de los artífices que florecieron en Sevilla*, Seville, 1900, II, p. 126, and: MONTOTO DE SEDAS, *l.c.*, p. 403.

11. HERNÁNDEZ DÍAZ, *l.c.*, II, pp. 182-183.



FIG. 3. — ZURBARÁN. — The Legend of the Bell. — Cincinnati Art Museum. (Gudiol).

surely influenced Zurbarán. Palomino's statement is most probably true, while Mayer's assertion¹² that Ribera, not Ruelas, was the leading influence on the early Zurbarán proceeds from an erroneous dating of the St. Peter retablo in the Cathedral of Seville, as we shall see in this study.

Mysticism is the mark of the Sevillian school, but the preoccupation with naturalistic genre exists not only in Velázquez and the school of Seville, but also at Valencia and in Northern Europe, not to speak of Naples and Northern Italy. Similar stylistic tendencies often appear at many places simultaneously when the time is ripe for them, and they even occur at regions separated by thousands of miles or by hundreds of years when the spiritual outlook of the creating artist is similar¹³. In Seville Ruelas and Herrera were working in the new tenebroso style, in Toledo Maino, Orrente, and Tristán, in Madrid Carducho, in Granada Sánchez Cotán, and in Valencia Ribalta, one of the earliest and most interesting Spanish painters

12. AUGUST L. MAYER, *Historia de la pintura española*, pp. 330-32.

13. See: CH. STERLING, in: "L'Amour de l'Art", I, January 1935, pp. 7-12.

in the new style. Some of these artists may have been influenced by Caravaggio, others may have developed the style from Venetian Mannerism or from the Bolognese school or from both. The actual manner in which the Early Baroque spread to and throughout the Peninsula is still uncertain, since the artistic relations between Northern Italy and Naples on the one hand and the various Spanish centers on the other, during the period from 1585 to 1620, have not been sufficiently studied¹⁴. The presence of Ribera in Naples after 1616 and the paintings and etchings he sent back to Spain must have been an important factor. Ribera was not only a disseminator of the Caravaggiesque style, but after 1634 also a direct influence himself on Zurbarán, since, as Kehrér has pointed out¹⁵, this artist used Ribera's etching



FIG. 4. — ZURBARÁN. — The Apotheosis of St. Thomas Aquinas.
— Provincial Museum, Seville. (Anderson).

of St. Peter for the two figures of that Saint at the high altar of the chapel dedicated to him in the Cathedral of Seville, done after 1634. The impressions Zurbarán received from Caravaggio directly, or more probably indirectly, are of the greatest importance. Zurbarán's plasticity, sobriety, chiaroscuro, and color design are closer to the Caravaggiesque style than to that of the painters active at Seville. But he must also have become acquainted with the work of Francisco de Herrera the Elder when he and Herrera each did one half of the St. Bonaventure series in 1629. Most of the parts painted by Herrera are now in the Carvallo Collection, Villandry, France. Another example of Herrera's influence on Zurbarán's work is the latter's *Pentecost*, at the Museum in Cádiz, which has the same intensity as Herrera's version of the subject, of 1617, at the Greco Museum, in Toledo, Spain¹⁶. As to Velázquez, we know that he was a close friend of Zurbarán during their early years at Seville, but we have no evidence of any artistic contact between them until much later, when he influenced Zurbarán in at least one instance. During the last decade of his life Zurbarán fell under the spell of Murillo, and this unfortunate infatuation, favored by the

14. See, however, the interesting but somewhat partial review of Italian influence in Spain in the Early Baroque, by R. LONGHI, *Vita artistica*, II, January 1927, no. 1, pp. 8-12.

15. KEHRER, *l.c.*, p. 35.

16. Reproduced by J. THACHER, *Francisco de Herrera the Elder*, in: "Art Bulletin", September 1937, XIX, opp. p. 231.



FIG. 5. — ZURBARÁN. — St. Peter Thomas. — Zoe Oliver Sherman Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



FIG. 6. — ZURBARÁN. — St. Cyrill of Constantinople. — Zoe Oliver Sherman Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

"Zeitgeist" of the incipient Late Baroque greatly harmed his own artistic personality.

* * *

Zurbarán's work can be divided roughly into five periods. His earliest known painting is the *Immaculate Conception* of 1616, the year in which the dogma received papal sanction, in the López Cepero Collection, Seville. In 1623 he signed a *San Serapio*, now lost, which hung for centuries at the Shod Mercedarians, Seville¹⁷. In the following year he dated the *Apostolado*, at the Museum, Lisbon. In 1626 he was commissioned to do twenty-one paintings for 4000 reales for the Dominican church of San Pablo at Seville. They were fourteen *Scenes from the life of St. Dominic*, the *Four Doctors of the Church*, and also *St. Bonaventure*, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, and *St. Dominic*. Two *Scenes of the Life of St. Dominic*, either partly repainted or done with the help of an assistant, were shown at the Seville Exhibition of 1929. They came from Santa María Magdalena, the former San Pablo, and it is possible, as E. Lafuente Ferrari (*l.c.*, p. 107) suggests, that they and the slightly later *Doctors of the Church* at the Seville Museum are all that remain of this series.

In 1627 Zurbarán dated a *Crucifixion* for San Pablo, now lost. To this period belongs also the *Virgin and her Parents*, in the Contini Bonacossi Collection, Rome, surely done before 1629 because of its close stylistic connection with the above-mentioned paintings. This work has been doubted, but I consider it authentic as far as I am able to judge from a reproduction. Mayer's dating, "before 1635", seems, however, too late¹⁸. I prefer to reserve judgment on the *Christ at the Column with Dominican Donor*, dated 1620, but not signed, in the Ahrens Collection, Hamburg, since the quality of the reproduction does not allow positive attribution¹⁹.



FIG. 7. — ZURBARÁN. — The Young Virgin Praying. — Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

17. See: MATUTE, *Archivo Hispalense*, 1887, III, p. 377, no. 48, and HERNÁNDEZ DÍAZ, *l.c.*, 1928, II, p. 182.

18. MAYER, *Historia de la pintura española*, p. 342, and the reproduction in his: *Old Spanish Masters from the Contini Bonacossi Collection*, Rome, 1930, pl. LXIII. If Zurbarán painted any part of the somewhat disconcerting *Birth of the Virgin* in the same Roman collection (see *l.c.*, pl. LXI and LXII), he would have done the seated figure in the left foreground and the standing one at the right which correspond to his style at this period. The rest of the painting is in my opinion probably not by Zurbarán's hand.

19. Attributed to Zurbarán by KEHRER, in: "Z.f.b.K", 1920/21, LV, p. 248; MAYER, *Historia de la pintura española*, p. 330, fig. 244; and TORMO, *Enciclopedia Italiana*, XXXV, p. 1059.

In the paintings of his early style — the first period — Zurbarán established himself immediately as a master whose special interest, acquired in the studios of Villanueva and Ruelas, was in sculptural form. He combined this with the new Caravaggiesque preoccupation with naturalism and the problems of chiaroscuro. This period is characterized by large figures, broad expanses of velvet-like draperies, and soft folds. The chiaroscuro contrast of the faces is subdued, not yet sharply focused, and in comparison to the following decade, their realism is less pronounced. The composition stresses verticals and shows a desire for architectonic order. Spatial clarity, however, is still sadly lacking. The figures are pressed together without room to move about; they are not clearly separated from one another and are arranged in one and the same plane with no attempt to create a feeling for depth. The crowded placing of figures with their broad draperies brings about a sense of tight atmosphere, of intensity, of drama and of pathos, traits usually associated with the Early Baroque and sometimes even more developed in the High Baroque. The magnificent *St. Bonaventure Presiding over a Chapter of the Franciscan Order*, at the Louvre (Fig. 1), painted in 1629, not only exemplifies all these qualities but contains a very incisive row of individual portraits. This is not surprising because Zurbarán's intense style would naturally be most effective in single figure studies, and, indeed, the single figures of Saints and monks he was to paint later constitute one of his chief claims to enduring fame. There is also in the Louvre another scene from the *St. Bonaventure* series which Zurbarán did for the Franciscan church of that name at Seville. The two other *Scenes of the Life of St. Bonaventure* by him are in the Museum at Dresden and in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin. The *Last Communion of St. Bonaventure* in the Palazzo Bianco at Genova²⁰, attributed to Zurbarán by Mayer, is certainly not by the master. The types, the arrangement, the size of the figures, the drawing of the folds, the lighting, and the perspective are all very different from his manner. The painting

20. Listed as by Zurbarán in the Soult sale. Also: JUSTI, *l.c.*, p. 160; MAYER, *Historia de la pintura española*, p. 335.



FIG. 8. — ZURBARÁN. — The Virgin of Las Cuevas. — Provincial Museum, Seville. (Anderson).

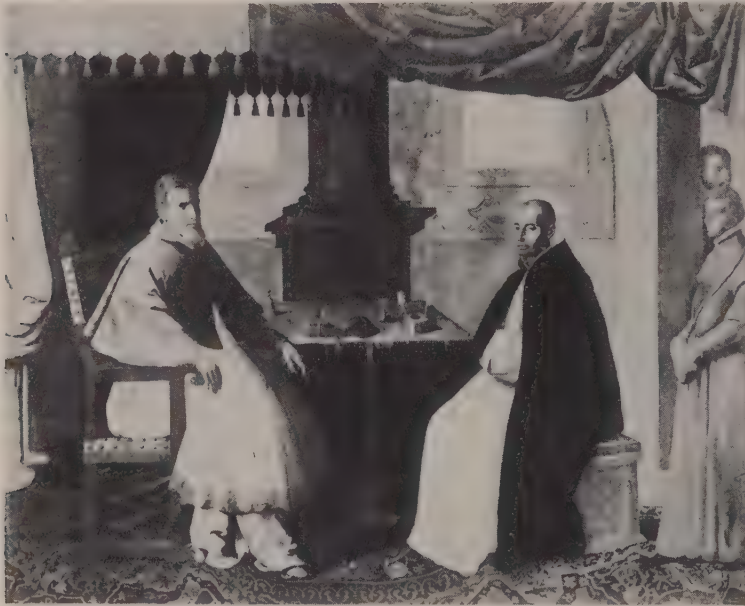


FIG. 9. — ZURBARÁN. — St. Bruno Visiting Pope Urban II. — Provincial Museum, Seville. (Anderson).

was probably done in the 1640's by a follower of Zurbarán.

At the transition into Zurbarán's second period stand three important *Scenes from the Life of St. Peter Nolasco*, formerly at the Shod Mercedarians at Seville. Two of them, now at the Prado, are dated 1629, while a third, the *Legend of the Bell of El Puig* (Fig. 3), painted one year later, hangs in the Museum of Cincinnati. In these paintings the artist has made great

advances toward clarity and depth in spatial arrangement. Notable, moreover, is the wonderful transparency and luminosity not only in the paintings as a whole, but especially in the faces (Fig. 2), which now seem to have the diaphanous quality of silverpoint drawings. An increased precision of draftsmanship has made them also much more realistic. As for the drapery, the large planes are broken up, the folds are smaller, not so soft and frequently of a starched rigidity.

The three St. Peter Nolasco paintings belong to a series of twenty-two scenes from the life of the Saint for the refectory of the Mercedarian Convent at Seville, for which Zurbarán signed a contract in August, 1628. The work was to be finished within a year and was to be executed with the help of assistants²¹. The document says expressly that the work was to be done by Zurbarán "and his men", thus proving the existence of a Zurbarán shop at an early date²². This shop was later to produce many of the works contracted for by the master and attributed to him. In September, 1629, Zurbarán was commissioned by the Shod Trinitarians to execute the paintings for a sculptured altar dedicated to St. Joseph in the Capilla Mayor,

21. The large painting depicting a *Saint with Three Young Men and a Dog*, formerly in the Hearst Collection, New York, is also said to represent a scene from the life of St. Peter Nolasco, namely the legend of the Bell, but this is not certain. I can recognize Zurbarán's brush only in the figure of the young Saint, the rest of the painting seems to me to be by a less skillful hand. There exist four more scenes from the life of St. Peter Nolasco, also from the Shod Mercedarians, which KEHRER, (*l.c.*), reproduced as being by Zurbarán but which are actually by Zurbarán's pupil Francisco Reina. They represent *King James I with the Image of the Virgin*, the *Miracle of the Choir*, the *Entombment of San Ramón*, and the *Miracle of the Sea*. Reina's authorship was established by SÁNCHEZ CANTÓN and can be proved by documents in the archives of the Shod Mercedarians to which the Count of Aguila referred in his correspondence with PONZ (see: CARRIAZO, in: "Archivo español de arte y arqueología", 1929, V. p. 160).

22. Published by LÓPEZ MARTÍNEZ, *Desde Martínez Montañés*, p. 221.

which has since disappeared²³. In 1630 he signed the *Portrait of the Venerable Osorio*, which was once in the Aniceto Bravo Collection, Seville²⁴. From this period are the *Portiuncula* from Jerez, at Cádiz, probably painted in 1629, and the *Christ Child Pricking His Finger*, Sánchez Pineda Collection, Seville, of about 1630.

From then on throughout the 1630's Zurbarán was active almost exclusively in the service of the various religious Orders, the Capuchins, the Mercedarians, the Carthusians, and the Hieronymites, all of whose robes were white, and from this time onward he developed that masterful variety in the rendering of white materials for which he is justly famous. No one else was so skilled in painting whites crisp as flakes of snow, soft as balls of cotton, creamy as heavy milk. Paul Guinard, to whom we owe the best essay on the master, once called his *Miracle of St. Hugo* at Seville: "*une symphonie en blanc majeur*"²⁵.

During the early 1630's — which we consider his second period — Zurbarán was the most famous painter in Seville and was very busy with commissions for the churches of the Andalusian metropolis, the richest town in Spain and one of the wealthiest in the world. One of the most important orders he received was the painting of the *Apotheosis of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Fig. 4) for the College of that name, now at the Seville Museum, which was contracted for in January, 1631, to be ready on St. John's day of that year²⁶. The figures have now become smaller, each is neatly separated from the other and set off against a light background, for which the artist often uses an exciting fiery orange. The spatial design has become still clearer. This is Zurbarán's most realistic period, in which he ex-

23. See: LÓPEZ MARTÍNEZ, *Retablos y escultores*, p. 8. This altar was still seen by PONZ, *l.c.*, vol. IX, letter V, 6, but F. GONZÁLEZ DE LEÓN (*Noticia artística de Sevilla*, 1844, II, p. 267), reports that the eight paintings comprising it had disappeared. They were last recorded in the collection of the Marquis of Salamanca sold around 1880.

24. J. AMADOR DE LOS RÍOS, *Sevilla pintoresca*, Seville, 1844, p. 423.

25. See his article in "Cahiers de Belgique", Sept. 1931, IV, p. 261.

26. See: HERNÁNDEZ DÍAZ, *l.c.*, II, p. 183.



FIG. 10. — ZURBARÁN. — The Defense of Cádiz by Don Fernando Girón against the English. — Prado, Madrid.

cells in painstakingly sharp and precise draftsmanship. Unlike El Greco's explosive eruptions, that fling the spectator skyward and so startle him that the strangest miracle seems more real and believable than an experience from daily life, Zurbarán's miracles are of a childlike simplicity born of naive faith. His sense of realism holds him rigidly to the ground. He paints his heavenly figures just as soberly as his earthly ones, an approach which he was to change progressively in the 1630's toward his mystic period. But now he merely places the heavenly personages on a second story, on a balcony of clouds, and his visions are as plain and homely as his realistic brush could make them. His miracles succeed in convincing us only by the naivety and greatness of his faith.

An altar of St. Andrew²⁷, perhaps from the Carmelite church of St. Albert at Seville, is precisely from this period. The church had been founded in 1602 and work was still going on in 1627. Zurbarán had painted an altar there which disappeared during the War of Independence²⁸. The center piece of Zurbarán's small altar represents a monumental *St. Andrew*, in yellow, now in the Baron Herzog Collection, Budapest. The two wings have entered the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, with the Zoe Oliver Sherman Collection. The altar was once in the collection of Marshal Soult and later owned by the Duke of Sutherland. The wings are inscribed *S. Pº. Tomas* and *S. Cirillo*, but have not been correctly identified heretofore. It is obvious that the Carmelite Saints Peter Thomas († 1366) (Fig. 5) and Cyrill of Constantinople († 1225) (Fig. 6) are represented on these wings. The first was Patriarch of Constantinople and one of the most fervent champions of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and the second a General of the Order. A date around 1630-1631 is indicated by the large planes of the drapery, the soft drawing of the folds, so characteristic of that period, and especially by the treatment of the faces, which are very close to the *Apotheosis of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Fig. 4)²⁹. To this second style belong also the *Vision of the Blessed Alonso Rodríguez*, of 1630, from the Jesuit church at Seville, now at the Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, Madrid; the *Pentecost*, from Jerez, at the Museum in Cádiz; the *Angel Gabriel*, from a lost *Annunciation*, Fabre Museum, Montpellier; the *Portrait of Archbishop Fray Diego de Dieza*, from the College of St. Thomas Aquinas, now in the Sierra y Pickman Collection, Seville; *St. Gregory*, two other *Doctors of the Church*, and three *Crucifixions*³⁰, all at the Museum, Seville; a *Veil of St.*

27. The Apostle Andrew was considered a Carmelite Saint, because the Bible says that before joining the followers of Our Lord he was a disciple of St. John the Baptist. St. John is said to have lived according to the rule of the Prophet Elijah whom the Carmelites have always considered their true founder. Thus we find the Spanish Carmelite Marco Antonio Alegre de Casanate in his *Paradisus Carmelitici decoris*, Lyon, 1639, p. 142, quoting earlier writers to the effect that "*Ioannes Baptista verus fuit Religionis Carmeli observator et Princeps cum discipulo suo S. Andrea*" and "*S. Andrea ut Baptistae discipulum inter Heliades adnumerando*".

28. See: PALOMINO, *l.c.*, III, p. 355, and GONZÁLEZ DE LEÓN, *l.c.*, I, p. 167.

29 I cannot accept KEHRER's argument, *l.c.*, p. 108, that the three paintings "were executed around 1650, because they represent the apex of Zurbarán's art". It seems to me that Zurbarán's best period was in the 1630's rather than around 1650. On this question I agree with MAYER, *Sevillaner Malerschule*, p. 150, who also suggests a date around 1630.

30. The *Crucifixion* (Carl W. Hamilton Collection, New York), attributed to Zurbarán by MAYER, *Historia de la pintura española*, p. 335, does not show his characteristic modeling of the body and drawing of the folds. It is in my

Veronica, Mariano Pacheco, Madrid, signed 1631; and *Two Angels with a Monstrance*, in the collection of the heirs of Isabel López, Madrid^{30a}.

From this period is the *Praying Young Virgin* (Fig. 7) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which has been variously dated between 1616 and 1638³¹. It is later than the Contini Bonacossi *Virgin and her Parents* executed before 1629. The modeling and the expression of the New York painting show the closest resemblance to the *Immaculate Conception* of the Marquis of Casa Domecq, Jerez, of 1632, and

the emphatic drawing of the curtain agrees with many other works of Zurbarán's second style just mentioned, all surely painted between 1630 and 1634. The suggestion of tenderness in the face of the Virgin foreshadows a more mystic approach in Zurbarán's art which was soon to become more outspoken. Once in the José Madrazo Collection, Madrid, and now in the Minneapolis Museum is another *Young Virgin Praying*, attributed to Zurbarán, which seems, however, much too weak for the master himself, and which should be given to one of his followers.

A more spiritual approach and the mystic feeling so characteristic of the Baroque are also evident in the signed *Still Life* of 1633 in the Contini Bonacossi Collection, Rome. The



FIG. 11. — ZURBARÁN. — The Battle of Our Lady of La Defensa at El Sotillo. — Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

opinion a copy, by the shop, of Zurbarán's *Crucifixion*, Seville, Museum, # 202. Another copy, in the Picardo Collection, Cádiz (Mas photograph 46775), was also declared an original by MAYER, l.c., p. 335.

30a. Rubens had done the same subject for the Descalzas Reales, Madrid.

31. See the references cited by H. B. WEHLE, *Catalogue of Italian, Spanish and Byzantine Paintings*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 1940, pp. 234-35; also: J. GUDIOL, *Spanish Painting*, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, 1941, p. 107.

fruit seem to have an inner life beyond their outward appearance. The versions of this *Still Life* in the Museums of St. Louis and San Diego are probably not replicas by the master's own hand, but contemporary copies perhaps by the son Juan Zurbarán who signed the excellent *Still Life* in the Museum of Modern Art at Kiev^{31a}. The two versions in America are less vigorous and precise in drawing than the original, and it is hard to believe that Zurbarán would repeat himself slavishly.

Another example of the fact that the realistic precision of Zurbarán's work around 1631 became more subdued in the following years is the series of six posthumous effigies of Mercedarian worthies painted for the Shod Mercedarians, but now at Madrid, five in the Academy of San Fernando and one, representing *San Carmelo*, Bishop of Teruel, at the church of St. Barbara. Zurbarán's pupil Francisco Reina did other paintings of this group, now at Seville³².

In the Museum at Seville are three paintings from the Carthusian monastery of Nuestra Señora de las Cuevas: the *Virgin of Las Cuevas*, *St. Bruno Visiting Pope Urban II*, and the *Miracle of St. Hugo*. All three are close in style and of the same period. Mayer assumes without reason that the Virgin is earlier than the other two³³. Nor can Cascales' dating (1629) be accepted; their advanced style dates them just before the trip to Madrid, close to 1634. In the *Virgin of Las Cuevas Protecting the Order* (Fig. 8) the folds are still clear cut and rather cardboard-like, similar to those which had been fashionable in Peninsular paintings ever since the period of the Van Eycks and Roger van der Weyden. The faces, however, are less transparent and somewhat chalky. The further progress in the realization of spatial clarity and depth made within the short space of two or three years can be seen very clearly by a comparison of the kneeling monks at the right of the *Virgin of Las Cuevas* with the adoring Emperor Charles V and his suite in the *St. Thomas Aquinas* painting (Fig. 4). Zurbarán now succeeds in giving a sense of the varying distances of one head from another by the use of lights and shadows which create a sensitive organization of receding planes. It is interesting to note that he borrowed the composition from an engraving of the *Death of St. Augustine* by the Flemish artist Schelte a Bolswert³⁴. Although the monumental coherence of the composition is thus to be credited indirectly to Rubens' balanced High Baroque style, rather than to Zurbarán, it agrees well with the artist's tendencies at this time as expressed in

31a. Reproduced in *Burl. Mag.*, 1938, LXXII, p. 191. By lines also *Still Life*, repr., *l.c.*, 1927, LI, p. 324.

32. Another series, from the Unshod Mercedarians at Seville, consisting of numerous small canvases of Martyred Saints of that Order, was published by D. Angulo Iníguez, in "Archivo español de arte", 1941, XIV, pp. 365 et seq., as having been conceived in all probability by Zurbarán, but chiefly executed by the shop. Four paintings, reproduced by Angulo, are now in the United States: a *Hanging Monk* in Hartford, Conn.; *Arnaldo de Arenchis*, on loan at the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass.; *Guillermo de Sagiano* and *San Serapio*, in New York.

33. MAYER, *Sevillaner Malerschule*, p. 148. Stylistic comparison leads me not to admit as valid documentary evidence the date of 1655 proposed by the present owner of the Cartuja, Carlos Serra Pickman, in *Discursos leídos ante la Academia de Bellas Artes de Sta. Isabel de Hungría de Sevilla*, 1934, p. 19. See also PONZ, *l.c.*, VIII, p. 231.

34. This fact was brought out by KEHRER, in: "Z.f.b.K.", 1920/21, LV, p. 250, who reproduces Schelte a Bolswert's engraving of 1624. Alonso Cano's drawing, Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, uses Zurbarán's painting.

other works. The symmetrical order of the design in comparison to the master's earlier periods is accompanied by an even greater precision in the rendering of detail, thus following what seems to be an unchanging principle of Spanish art from the Primitives onward: "The union of the highest possible realism of detail with the utmost schematization of the general design", as was so lucidly stated by Chandler R. Post³⁵. In his *St. Bruno Visiting Pope Urban II* (Fig. 9), Zurbarán has stripped the scene, as was his custom, of all sentimental or unnecessary detail. We are forced to concentrate our attention on the individual figures and are made to feel the supernatural life within them. The difference between the mortal Pope and the holy Saint is mystically suggested. Each of Zurbarán's personages becomes a complete universe, and everything that happens in his pictures happens in the inner world of the individual. These figures are meditating so quietly that only things of the spirit could affect them; they are in a state of divine grace³⁶.

Zurbarán made a brusque turn from this spiritual atmosphere to mythological subjects, battle scenes and worldly portraits when some time between 1633 and 1635—but most probably after March, 1634—he was called to Madrid by Philip IV on the advice of Velázquez. Here Zurbarán was commissioned to paint for the Salón de Reinos of the Buen Retiro Palace one of the twelve famous *Battle Scenes* and a series of ten paintings representing the *Labors of Hercules*. All of these paintings by Zurbarán are now in the Prado³⁷.

The battle scene represents the *Defense of Cádiz* by Don Fernando de Girón (Fig. 10). The Marshal, confined to his chair because of his gout, is giving the orders which were to result in the repulse of the English, who had landed on November 1, 1625, and who withdrew a week later. It seems very strange that this picture should have been attributed to Eugenio Caxés (1577-1634) from the time of Ponz³⁸ to the latest Prado publication³⁹. The painting has nothing whatsoever to do with Caxés' soft and mannered style⁴⁰ and is thoroughly characteristic of Zurbarán in the balanced arrangement of the figures, evenly distributed over the picture plane. The pose of the center figure resembles that of King Jaime I in

35. See: CH. R. POST, *A History of Spanish Painting*, Cambridge, 1932, V, p. 154.

36. See the splendid appreciation of Zurbarán by CH. ZERVOS, in: "Cahiers d'Art", 1927, II, p. 86.

37. [Zurbarán was in Seville in March, 1634, when he gave a power of attorney. Tormo has shown that the Battle Scenes were ordered before September, 1634, perhaps as early as 1633, and that they were finished in 1635. They are mentioned together with the Hercules series—but unfortunately without naming any painters—in a poem by Manuel Gallego published in 1637. Zurbarán, therefore, must have been in Madrid in 1634 or 1635, and not in 1650 as stated by Palomino, III, p. 356.] See: LÓPEZ MARTÍNEZ, *Arquitectos*, p. 215, and TORMO, *Velázquez, el salón de Reinos del Buen Retiro y el Poeta del Palacio y del Pintor*, in: "Boletín de la Sociedad española de excursiones", 1911, XIX, pp. 25-44, 85-111, 191-217, and 274-305, especially pp. 215 and 280.

38. PONZ, *l.c.*, VI, p. 114. Also: MAYER, *Historia de la pintura española*, fig. 314. The inventory of 1703 cites it without mentioning any author, neither Zurbarán nor Caxés (see: TORMO, in: "Boletín soc. esp. exc.", 1911, XIX, p. 35). PALOMINO, *l.c.*, III, does not refer to it either under Caxés nor under Zurbarán.

39. F. J. SÁNCHEZ CANTÓN, *Museo del Prado, Catálogo*, 1943, # 656.

40. For comparison one may study Caxés' paintings (cited by R. LONGHI, *Vita artistica*, II, January 1927, p. 8), as well as his drawings (see the reproductions in: SÁNCHEZ CANTÓN, *Dibujos españoles*, Madrid, 1930, II, nos. CLXXVIII to CLXXXVI). The attribution to Zurbarán was first made by LONGHI, *l.c.*, p. 8, but has not received general acceptance.

the earlier Cincinnati painting (Fig. 3), as well as of other portraits by the master from this time. I am thinking of *Don Alonso de Verdugo de Albornoz* (1623-1695) later first Count of Torrepalma — done in 1635 when he was twelve — in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin⁴¹, and of the *Knight in Armor* of the Dolfuss Sale⁴². Zurbarán's authorship is also made certain by the standing figure at the left, very similar to a kindred Knight of Santiago standing behind Henry II in the scene of *Fray Yáñez de Figueroa*, at Guadalupe. The Guadalupe Knight has been believed to be a self portrait; this is more likely to be true of the *Battle Scene* figure, thus echoing Velázquez' self portrait in the *Surrender of Breda*. The severe draftsmanship, the modeling of the faces, hands and draperies in the Prado painting — all accord perfectly with Zurbarán's style. Reminiscences from the work in the Salón de Reinos were to linger on in the *Battle of El Sotillo* (Fig. 11) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, from Jerez, of about 1636.

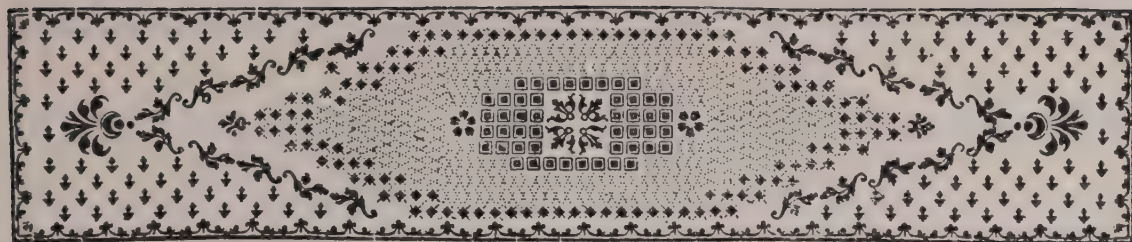
Certain writers have also doubted that Zurbarán painted some or all of the *Hercules* series⁴³. Palomino, who describes them as hanging in the Salón de Reinos between the *Battle Scenes*, was the first to attribute them to Zurbarán. Convincing evidence for his authorship are the modeling and the outline of the bodies, and such details as the stance, the foliage, and the painting of the Hydra. Slight deviations from Zurbarán's usual style in the facial types, and also in details of the hands and the drapery folds, may be explained by the treatment imposed by the subject matter as well as by the participation of assistants. Many of the scenes are set against a landscape background, and from now on, as we shall see, Zurbarán made frequent use of this new element in his art. He will also use from now on the device of painting a narrative scene in very small scale in the background. Probably influenced by Ribera's *Prometheus* and by his *Ixion*, of 1632, now in the Prado, Zurbarán's *Hercules* series shows the monumental, virile mood, the plastic modeling of the bodies, through chiaroscuro lighting, and the absence of anecdotal detail so characteristic of both artists. I shall take up this point in the second part of this article.

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41. Identified by the MARQUIS OF SALTILLO, *Investigación y Progreso*, 1928, II, pp. 33-34.

42. Jean Dolfuss sale, Hotel Drouot, Paris, November 11 to 13, 1912, no. 81. This painting is apparently identical with a *Military Saint*, perhaps St. Ferdinand, Soult sale, Paris, May 19 to 22, 1852, no. 39.

43. CEÁN BERMÚDEZ, *l.c.*, VI, p. 52, accepted only four. TORMO, in: "Boletín soc. esp. exc.", 1911, XIX, pp. 215, 307 and March 1941, XLIX pp. 8, 10, retains the three best of the series (Prado, nos. 1245, 1247, and 1249) for Zurbarán while he attributes the others to the Florentine Angelo Nardi (1584-1663) who was in Spain since 1607. In the same article, *l.c.*, p. 215, TORMO gave to Nardi the representation of *St. Catherine*, of which there are many versions in Spain and Italy. This painting had been given to Zurbarán, for instance by MAYER, *Sevillaner Malerschule*, p. 158, who calls it one of Zurbarán's most important while it looks certainly like a mediocre work of an Italian painter.



A BRIEF SURVEY OF MEXICAN COLONIAL SCULPTURE



FIG. 1. — XVII CENTURY. — High relief over a side entrance. — Cathedral, Mexico City. Photo. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

SCULPTURE in New Spain comprised not only that art in the proper sense of the word, but also and in a greater degree, the decorative elements that form part of architectural monuments, such as statues and high- and low-reliefs in façades and ornamental wood carving in interiors, including images of Saints in gilt and painted wood, a prominent feature of Spanish and Spanish Colonial ecclesiastical art.

* * *

Ornamental sculpture was most abundant in Mexico. As a general rule there are to be seen, on either side of the principal entrance of a Colonial church, two, four, or even six statues of Saints carved out of stone within niches,

under canopies and between two columns or pilasters, while on the upper story there may be similar columns and statues on either side of the window of the choir-loft. If such a window is lacking, there is instead a panel in high- or low-relief depicting some incident in the life of the Saint to whom the church is dedicated.

Some ecclesiastical buildings are crowned by statues, and in civil architecture, stone carving clusters around portals, windows, corners, and pinnacles.

Colonial sculpture in stone, when viewed at close quarters, appears coarse and unfinished, but when seen at a distance it keeps perfect harmony with the building it decorates.



FIG. 2. — XVI CENTURY. — Cross at Acolman.

Towards the end of the XVIII century a reaction set in against over-ornamentation, due principally to the influence of the great Spanish artist, Manuel Tolsá, and classic forms, as then interpreted in the Peninsula, began to make their appearance in the new buildings that arose in the capital of New Spain.

It must be borne in mind, however, that during the three centuries of the

During the XVI century the predominating sculpture of buildings corresponded to the Plateresque style and was inspired directly by Spanish monuments. In the old monasteries of San Agustín Acolman (Fig. 4), Yuriria, and others, the influence of the Hospital de la Santa Cruz in Toledo and similar buildings in Salamanca, Valladolid and other old Spanish cities is clearly perceptible.



FIG. 3. — XVI CENTURY. — Entrance to the old Dominican Church. — Tepoztlán, Morelos.

During the XVII century, this Plateresque style, owing to its over-elaborate ornamentation, developed into what we may call Mexican Baroque, and in the XVIII the Baroque in turn gave way to the Churrigueresque. If the Baroque, therefore, was an exaggeration, so to speak, of the Plateresque, the Churrigueresque was an exaggeration of the Baroque.



FIG. 4. — XVI CENTURY. — Entrance to the Church. — San Agustín Acolman. Photo. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

Viceregal period, sculpture in Mexico revealed a special local colour, if we may use the term, due to the fact that the handicraft of the Indian workmen tended to follow the dictates of their ancestral art of stone carving (Fig. 2) and, in not a few cases, the pre-hispanic influence is clearly visible in sculptured ornaments, since they are more in the plane than in the round (Fig. 3).

* * *

In the panel in high relief (Fig. 5)

over the principal entrance to the former church of San Agustín, now the National Library, the Saint is shown surrounded by other members of his Order, but the figure representing him is on a much larger scale than the rest, to emphasize his greater importance, — a reminiscence of ancient Byzantine art. This relief is perhaps the finest in Mexico, but there are other high- and low-reliefs of artistic importance, such as those in white marble over the portals of the Cathedral (Fig. 1) and the ones in stone over the principal door-ways of the churches of Santo Domingo and La Profesa.

Notable examples of ornamental carving on columns and pilasters are to be seen in the Church of Santa Monica (Fig. 6), in Guadalajara, and in the cloister of the old Monastery of La Merced (Fig. 7) in Mexico City.

The most important wood carving of the XVII century was undoubtedly the *sillería*, or choir-stalls, that belonged



FIG. 5. — XVII CENTURY. — High relief over the entrance of the old church of San Agustín, Mexico City. Photo. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

to the former Monastery of San Agustín (Fig. 3), now preserved in the National Preparatory School. "These exquisitely beautiful choir-stalls", says Sylvester Baxter, "are comparable in charm to the best similar work in Europe, combining the rich and graceful character of the Free Renaissance with some of the quaintly naive spirit of Gothic carving. . . . That they were wrought by Mexican hands is apparent from certain



FIG. 6. — XVII CENTURY. — Entrance to the Church of Santa Mónica, Guadalajara.



FIG. 7. — XVII CENTURY. — Cloister of the old monastery of La Merced, Mexico City.

touches of local colour in various reliefs, — such as the depiction of monkeys and other tropical animals in scenes like the garden of Eden, including the famous Mexican bird, the guacamayo . . ." The panels of these stalls, carved in high-relief, represent for the most part Old Testament subjects; some, however, including the large central panel that marked the head of the choir, are devoted to events in the life of Saint Augustine. "Beside the large arched panels in each stall, there is a smaller one beneath, and another of the same small size in the back of each seat. . . . The purely ornamental carving is exceedingly rich, containing many charming heads of graceful figures. The whole design is excellent in form and beautifully proportioned"¹.

By no means inferior to the above are the choir-stalls of the Cathedral, which were made by Juan de Rojas in 1695.

* * *

1. SYLVESTER BAXTER. — *Spanish Colonial Architecture in Mexico*, Boston, 1901.

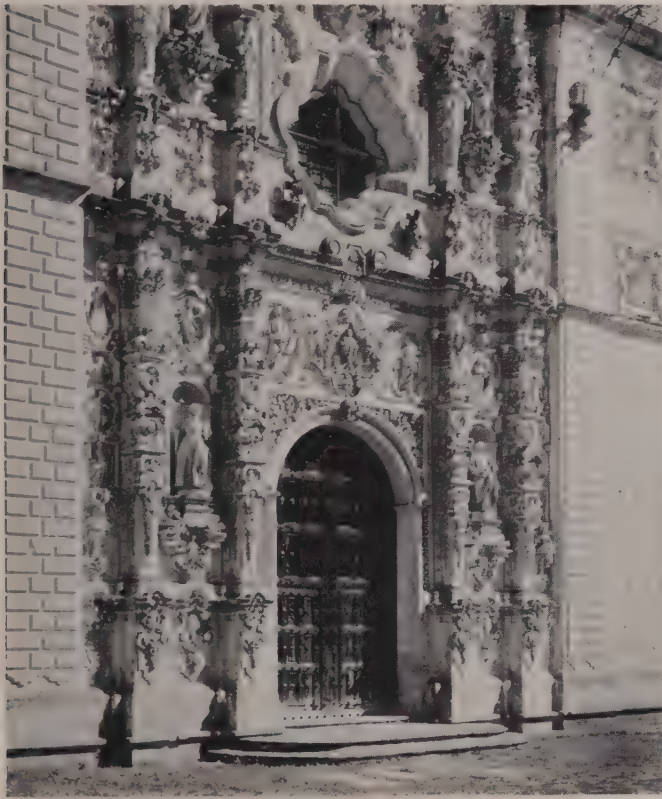


FIG. 8. — XVIII CENTURY. — Entrance to the Church at Tepetzotlán.
Photo. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

flourished more than anywhere else in the wonderful gilt *retablos*, or *reredos*, of Mexican Colonial churches. Witness the *Altar de los Reyes* in the Cathedral, and the altars of the Church of La Enseñanza, not to mention thousands of others, the most remarkable of which are those of Taxco, Tepetzotlán (Fig. 14) and La Valenciana. Don Manuel Revilla² eulogizes "the niches charged with carvings; the medallions in low-relief and the polychrome sculptures of martyrs, of prophets, of virgins, and of angels that reveal themselves

The acme of ornamental carving, both in stone and in wood, was reached in Mexican Churrigueresque. Of the literally thousand portals of churches built during the XVII century, the most remarkably lavish are those of El Sagrario and La Santísima Trinidad in the Capital City and that of the Jesuit College of Tepetzotlán (Fig. 8), in the State of Mexico. The most noteworthy façades of non-ecclesiastical buildings are those of the house of the Conde de Heras and the Casa de los Mascarones, "the House of Masks", so called on account of certain ornaments of its front.

But Churrigueresque carving was not confined to façades of churches and houses, nor to fountains (Figs. 10 and 11) and public monuments generally; it



FIG. 9. — XVII CENTURY. — Choir-stalls of the Monastery of San Agustín (the Prior's seat). — National Preparatory School, Mexico City.

2. MANUEL G. REVILLA. — *El Arte en México en la Época Antigua y durante el Gobierno Virreinal*, México, 1893.



FIG. 10. — XVIII CENTURY. — Fountain of El Salto del Agua.

also as images for private worship (Fig. 16). Although they present more or less the same characteristics as stone statues, they are more carefully carved. This kind of sculpture in wood is essentially of pure Spanish tradition, but the sculptors of Colonial Mexico never accomplished anything so fine as did Pedro de Mena, Alonso Cano, Zalcillo, and other famous *imagineros* or image-makers of Spain. As a general rule, the expression on the faces of these statues is both sweet and natural, but there are sometimes to be found, especially in small villages and out-of-the-way chapels, Crucifixes and other images of an exaggerated and even gruesome appearance. The *estofado* of these wooden figures, however, is always rich and in most cases artistically executed. *Estofado* is the name given to the painting and gilding of such statues. The process was as follows: first, the whole figure was covered by a coating of plaster, and was then gilded all over, with the exception, naturally, of the face, hands, and feet; afterwards the colouring was applied nearly always with a diaper design, the gold ground showing in such parts as suited the fancy of the artist. The flesh parts and hair were painted in their natural colours.

There is unfortunately very little variety in the pose of these wooden statues:

in the penumbra against the gold background of the *retablos* toned down by the smoke of incense and of candles and by the dust of years."

But unfortunately the Classic Renaissance that became the fashion towards the end of the XVIII century did not favour much decorative carving and thus caused the destruction of many Churrigueresque retablos, to be replaced by formal and rather cold altars of neo-classic design. Some sculptured ornaments, however, were employed to enhance the appearance of certain buildings, such as the festoons and garlands that decorate the façade of the Cathedral of Mexico, which were the work of one Nicolas Girón.

* * *

Statues of saints in wood, generally coloured and gilded, served not only as integral parts of church altars and pious ornaments for convents and colleges, but

they are nearly always in the same position, and a common characteristic is their exaggeratedly flowing mantles. But all this, of course, is in perfect harmony with their baroque and churrigueresque surroundings. The best statues of this kind are to be seen in some of the old *retablos*, or *reredos*, of Huejotzingo, Xochimilco, the Cathedrals of Mexico (Fig. 16) and Puebla, Tepotzotlán, and a thousand others throughout the breadth and length of the country. The *Altar de los Reyes* in the Cathedral of Mexico, designed and executed by a Sevillian artist of the name of Jerónimo de Balbás in 1737, is adorned with some very fine statues, among them one representing King Edward the Confessor and another, Queen Margaret of Scotland. The *Altar de los Reyes*, according to a distinguished author, "has the effect of a lofty grotto, heavily encrusted with



FIG. 11. — XVIII CENTURY. — Fountain in the house of the Conde de Santiago. Photo. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.



FIG. 12. — TOLSA. — XVIII Century. — Statue of Charles IV. — Mexico City.

gold in every part and glittering with jewels — all this as a regal environment for a throng of sacred figures, in the round or in high relief and almost animate in their brilliant colourings; a host of saints, angels and cherubs assembled in joyous adoration for the miraculous scenes enacted in the paintings which they surround"¹.

Towards the close of the XVIII century what may be called schools of sculptors in wood, or *imagineros*, arose in New Spain: the three principal ones



FIG. 13A & B. — ZACARÍAS CORA. — XVIII Century. — Statues on the towers of the Cathedral, Mexico City. Photo. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

were in Puebla, the City of Mexico, and Querétaro.

The principal sculptors of Puebla were:

José Antonio Villegas de Cora (1713-1785), who besides imitating nature remarkably well, knew how to idealize his figures; the features of his statues of the Blessed Virgin were always beautiful. Zacarías Cora (1752-1819), a nephew of de Cora, whose works reveal good knowledge of human anatomy. José Villegas (1760-1821), also a relation of de Cora,

who was especially skilful in carving garments, although he greatly exaggerated their flowing lines.

The school of Mexico City was formed by: Manuel Tolsá and his pupil Pedro Patiño Ixtolinque. Tolsá was primarily an out-and-out sculptor; but he also produced work as an *imaginero*, or image-maker. As such, he wrought the statues for the altars that he built to replace the former churrigueresque *retablos* in the Cathedral, Santo Domingo, La Profesa and other churches; they are on the whole rather cold and formal. Patiño Ixtolinque, a native Indian, followed closely on his master's steps and was more or less an assistant of his.

Two former pupils of Tolsá in the Academy of San Carlos (1795) constituted the school of Querétaro: Mariano Arce and Mariano Perusquía. Arce was the author of the fine group of *La Piedad* in the church of Santa Clara, which is "notable for the masterly handling of the draperies as well as the monumental quality of the composition"¹. Perusquía revealed good knowledge of human anatomy and proved himself a master in facial expression in his *Crucifix* in the same church, and in many other coloured statues of special merit.

The small statues of Saints that were made in Guatemala, then a part of New Spain, usually had real hair and eye-lashes. They were carved out of a wood called *zumpante* (*Erithryna coralloides*), which is almost as light as cork and conveniently soft to work upon.

* * *

Manuel Tolsá, the foremost sculptor of New Spain, was born an Enguerra in

Valencia, Spain, in 1767; he studied at the Academy of San Carlos in Valencia, and when that of the same name was established in the City of Mexico, he was called upon to come and teach sculpture and architecture in the new Institution. He arrived in Mexico in 1791 and remained there for the rest of his life. He died in 1816.

As an architect, Tolsá is best remembered as the author of the Escuela de Minería, or School of Mines, one of the most magnificent palaces in Mexico City; and as a sculptor he attained international fame by his statue of *Charles IV* (Fig. 12), which is undoubtedly the finest equestrian statue in America; it has few rivals in the whole world, since competent critics have considered it not inferior to Verrochio's *Colleone* or Donatello's *Gattamelata*. Permission to erect this statue was granted, at the request of the Viceroy Marqués de Branciforte, by Royal Order issued on the 30 November, 1795. But while the work of casting was in progress, a gilded model of wood and plaster was erected temporarily in its place, in the centre of the Plaza Mayor, or Great Square of the City; and



FIG. 14. — XVIII CENTURY. — Ivory statuette.

as soon as the bronze statue was finished it was unveiled with great pomp on the 9th of December, 1803. There it remained until the end of the War of Independence in 1821, when, to preserve the monument from destruction by the rabble, it was concealed within a huge wooden globe. A few years later, in 1824, the statue was removed to the cloister of the old University, whence it was transferred, in 1852, to the Plaza de la Reforma.

The height of the statue is fifteen feet nine inches, and its weight nearly twenty tons. It is a remarkable fact that both horse and rider were cast in one piece, a feat, it appears, never accomplished before or since in similar sculptures. The fusing of the huge mass of metal, which Tolsá entrusted to Don Salvador de la Vega, an accomplished smelter, lasted two whole days, at the end of which the immense casting came from the crude mould intact. The cleaning and polishing



FIG. 15. — TOLSÁ. — XVIII Century. — Statue of the Theological Virtues on top of the clock of the Cathedral, Mexico City. Photo. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.



FIG. 16. — XVIII CENTURY. — Statue of Our Lady, estofado. — Churubusco. Photo. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

of the statue took no less than fourteen months. Charles IV is represented as a Roman hero, wearing a laurel crown and holding a sceptre in his right hand. The horse is perfectly proportioned, since it seems that Tolsá took as his model a very noble *percheron* from the stables of the Marqués del Jaral. "The statue is colossal and grandiose, for Tolsá was grandiose . . . This one is in the classic style . . . It cannot be called, however, a faithful portrait of Charles IV, whose ignoble nature was totally lacking of kingly dignity"³. Other statues by Tolsá — all of them of evident classic influence — included the *Immaculate Conception*, in bronze, and the *Doctors of the Church*, in white stucco, which he made for the High Altar of Puebla Cathedral. The remaining statues of that altar (which by the way, was built by Tolsá himself after his own plans) were the work of his pupil, Ixtolinque.

The finest works of Tolsá in stone are the statues of *Faith, Hope and Charity*³ that crown the clock of the Cathedral of Mexico (Fig. 15). They too reveal classic influence; the other statues on the towers of the same Cathedral (Figs. 13A and B) were the work of Zacarías Cora from designs by Tolsá, and would do honour to any sculptor. All Tolsá's sculptures, both in bronze and stone, are remarkable for their elegant and flexibly flowing lines. Not only do they reveal great personality, but also a profound knowledge of ancient art. If any defects are to be found in them, it is that they are slightly heavy and emphatic, and that the draperies, in many cases, are after the affected manner of Bernini.

With regard to the numerous ivory statuettes (Fig. 14) that are to be found in Mexico, it can be safely averred that most of them were not carved in New Spain but in the Philippine Islands, though a few of them are undoubtedly of Mexican workmanship, out of material imported from the East in the famous Manila galleons that used to come to Acapulco.

MANUEL ROMERO DE TERREROS.

3. The attributes in gilt bronze that these statues bear were chased by Don Jerónimo Antonio Gil, a famous engraver, and are, respectively: those of *Faith*, a chalice and a cross, of *Hope*, an anchor, and of *Charity*, a flame.

THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM'S

DANCING SIVA

SOUTH INDIA is famed for its bronze figures, among which none is more remarkable for beauty and character than the *Dancing Siva* (Natarāja: The Lord of the Dance). Some of the most splendid of these figures seem to have been produced under the patronage of the Chola kings, and it is probably from about the end of the period of Chola power, possibly in the XII century, that the Natarāja of the Royal Ontario Museum's collection originates. Although the position and attributes of Natarāja are traditional and change little in individual specimens, there is a great difference in age, quality, size, and particularly in condition. Since many of the finest figures have lost important parts, such as the enclosing circle, it is rare indeed to find one that is preserved in its entirety. A large and absolutely complete figure, more than forty inches high and of the finest design and workmanship, the specimen in the Royal Ontario Museum (Figs. 1 and 2), is a magnificent memorial of a great period of bronze art. It was moulded by the *cire-perdue* process, possibly in a single piece, and now has a light patination of green which does not obscure the fine detail of the ornament.

A comprehension of the art of India requires a mind receptive to the intention of the artist. This is particularly true of the religious art of India, which expresses itself in traditional forms which the artist is often unable to vary. Through an understanding of these forms a previously unintelligible subject becomes full of interest and beauty. In the whole field of Indian art, the need of sympathetic consideration of the artist's message is nowhere greater than in the concept of the *Dancing Siva*. It is unsurpassed among great works of symbolism, and contains a message of hope and salvation. Each part of the complex design has its special meaning; and it might well be called the noblest and most significant creation of the art of India.

The Hindu thinks of life as a wheel, the revolutions of which bring about creation, existence and later destruction, followed by a period of repose, then ultimate liberation from further rebirth. Liberation is not inevitable, but depends on individual

merit — and sometimes a long series of incarnations in various forms must first be endured. This philosophy of life is portrayed in the cosmic dance of Siva, which is a graphic representation of the activities of the Supreme Lord of the Universe, both as the maintainer of the natural order and as the creator and saviour of mankind.

Siva is generally known as the third person of the Hindu Trinity, Brahma being the first person and Vishnu the second. Just as Brahma is said to create and Vishnu to maintain, so Siva has the function of destroying. The Hindu of northern India would doubtless see in the Dance of Siva the god's rejoicing at the day of universal destruction foretold in ancient books. South India, however, has a special cult of Siva; to his followers he is the Supreme Lord, the creator and sustainer of all life, and the other gods are only playthings of his fancy. The Saivite faith has produced a school of mysticism with a high moral code and an ascetic view of life, the symbol of which is the Lord of the Divine Dance.

Within the flame-edged circle of the universe, the god Siva dances with serene countenance the Five-fold Dance of Life, which brings about the Creation, Preservation, Destruction, Repose and Liberation of all beings. The four-armed god carries in one hand a drum, which symbolizes the activities of creation, setting the rhythm to which the world moves. The uplifted hand is in the attitude of reassurance against fear, and typifies the preservation of life by divine power. Another hand carries a ball of fire, which stands for the destroying element in nature, always followed by rebirth in another form. The idea of rest is conveyed by the leg which upholds the figure, and the concept of salvation is shown by the uplifted foot, symbol of divine activity in the world of men. The small figure upon which Siva stands represents evil and disorder; as their conqueror, Siva treads upon them in his triumphant dance.

The Asiatic artist has since very early times represented divine beings with many arms, which are intended to symbolize their numerous powers and attributes; some divinities also have several heads. Brahma has four heads; he is supposed to have once



FIG. 1.—SOUTH INDIAN, CHOLA DYNASTY, A.D. 850-1100.—Bronze figure of the Dancing Siva (Nataraja) (back-view).—Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, Toronto, Canada.

had a fifth one, which was cut off by Siva as a punishment for having made a mis-statement. The skull of Brahma's fifth head is worn as a trophy on Natarāja's crown; other ornaments are the crescent moon and the head of a cobra, the latter being a symbol of venerable wisdom. A most remarkable assortment of jewelry is worn by the dancing figure, including a collar, bracelets, anklets, bangles, foot ornaments, rings for fingers, thumbs and toes, and both a man's and a woman's ear-ring.

Seven streams of water radiate from each side of Siva's head, and refer to the ancient legend that he once kept the waters of the heavenly river Ganges imprisoned in his hair. He finally released the Ganges in seven streams, one of which is the present sacred river of India. The little figure with clasped hands usually shown amid the seven streams is the river goddess Gangā.

The dance of Siva as Destroyer and Creator therefore expresses the cycle of life as the Saivite sees it. No one would say that the dancing figure is the god himself; it is but the dance of the god which is represented. The images of Siva are only symbols

of an abstraction, an Omnipotence given personal form merely that it may be represented in bronze or stone. The stone or bronze form has sanctity, and miraculous powers may be attributed to it, but only the ignorant would consider it to be Siva himself. To the wise it symbolizes an all-pervasive reality, the essence of which is pure spirit and therefore beyond representation or comprehension.

Siva is the giant world-dominating figure of the cosmic dance, but he also lives and moves among men as an ash-smeared ascetic or a wandering mendicant, sometimes as a fierce besieger of walled cities. There is no contradiction in these various forms, for the divine personality is above limitations of space and time, and can manifest in many forms at the same instant.

Although other dances of Siva are known to iconography, they are of far less importance, and are usually expressions of a passing mood or playful impulse. Natarāja is unique, and has called forth the following tribute from the French archaeologist M. René Grousset: "For ever blessed be the sacred land to which humanity is indebted for such enrichment."

F. ST.G. SPENDLOVE.



FIG. 2.—SOUTH INDIAN, CHOLA DYNASTY, A.D. 850-1100.—Bronze figure of the Dancing Siva (Nataraja) (front-view)—Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, Toronto, Canada.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

CHARLES DE TOLNAY, *History and Technique of Old Master Drawings: A Handbook*;—New York, H. Bittner & Co., 1943, 9 x 12, VII—155 p., pl. with 261 ill. \$20.00

By the efforts of many, we are beginning to possess a series of almost uniform quartos in the field of readable, usable art scholarship, and more especially in the division of drawings. Hadeln's volumes on the Venetians, Lugt's *Les Marques de Collections*, the mellow revised edition of Berenson's *Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, the catalogue of the Fogg Museum drawings, and Panofsky's two recent volumes on Dürer are highlights that come readily to mind. Charles de Tolnay's new book is a candidate for this company. Mr. de Tolnay disavows the intent to supersede Meder's *Die Handzeichnung*; but he feels that by Meder "the point of view of the historical development was insufficiently kept in mind"; so he has carried on a century beyond Meder's arbitrary terminus of 1800, laid stress on origins, and put his weightiest chapter on a chronological basis. He also disavows completeness, but he has produced far more than a picture-book with a text. He has chosen to emphasize long-continued national developments of drawing and shorter regional concentrations of great activity and high quality.

To one familiar with Meder, with Pevsner on art academies, and with Blunt on Italian art theory, Tolnay's survey of the pronouncements on what drawing was supposed to be will seem breathless but brilliant. It is a fine piece of explaining, with admirably-chosen quotations. It is certainly an accomplishment to get from mediaeval schemata past the Mannerist jargon of *disegno interno*, etc., to the subjective appreciations of the French XVIII and XIX century critics, and to wind up with the more objective view of a Rodin, all in fifteen quarto pages.

Your reviewer likes especially Tolnay's paragraphs on the domains in which drawing surpasses the possibilities of painting; one "the representation of indefinable realms", the other "the very definite". The author's great scholarship in Bosch, Brueghel, and Michelangelo has caused no disproportion; though it is pleasant to note his passion for Pisanello.

He avoids the repetitiousness of Meder by cutting out of the chapter called *Methods of Instruction* everything mentioned under theories. The succeeding chapter, an analysis of categories of drawing seen from the points of view of both producer and consumer, is extended into a discussion of the origins of renaissance and modern drawing; the separation is a matter of convenience. A later chapter on

materials and techniques, a scant four pages, seems a bit less than the proper minimum. More about the sources and chemistry of various wet and dry media would not have come amiss, for the existing paragraphs describe only the externalities.

The pages headed *Principal Methods of Treatment* are a quick exposition of the linear *versus* the plastic *versus* the pictorial; it is suggested that a highly important step in *expertise* is to ascertain whether the method of a particular drawing is in or out of the general context of its period and region. A linear work done in a pictorial school has by that circumstance a certain salience.

Period and region are the basis for the *Survey of the Development of Drawing* which occupies thirty pages or so and in which, despite compression, the reader is given useful insight and guidance to the great schools and masters. Mr. de Tolnay is a man with a truly good eye and an obedient and sympathetic vocabulary. Witness his saying that in Pisanello "the flower becomes animal, and the animal and the flower together become man"; or his remarking (upon the absence of drawings by Caravaggio) that only by Caravaggio's influence can one explain the powerful chiaroscuro which Guercino built on the Carracci's foundation; or his emphasis on the inheritance from French mediaeval sculpture in a portrait drawing given to Fouquet.

The final chapter on collecting is a skillful introduction to an important part of the history of taste. Tolnay's examination of the changing intents of collectors and collections from the XV century to the XX century supplements the forever fascinating statistics of Frits Lugt.

Throughout this book one notices a battle between the desire to be specific and clear, and a fairly strict budget. Apparently there was no publishing subvention. A slightly larger budget would have permitted wider sale at a lower price, and could have improved the quality of the illustrations. Publishing subventions are one of the nicest ways of sharing wealth that I know. Think what it did for such a book as *Plantations of the Carolina Low Country*, which was priced at only six dollars.

Making reproductions from other reproductions, which is under some conditions inevitable, is always a sad business. Mr. de Tolnay's illustrations have been laid out with great care for revealing juxtapositions, and there are some interesting choices as well as some unpublished novelties among them. But a good many are so pale as to be almost

illegible (e. g., Pisanello 27, Pontormo 97, J. Bellini 114), too many are seen as through a glass darkly, and sometimes there is a crashing difference of printing, as between the two Ghirlandaio's, 52 and 53 (one evidently from a good photograph and the other from a halftone). There are also a good many misprints, chiefly in French. There is one amusing misunderstanding, by which Mr. Archibald G. B. Russell's official title of Lancaster Herald appears as a place name; but so charming an error requires no forgiveness, only gratitude. The notes, the bibliographical apparatus, and the comments on the illustrations are pleasing. The carrying of the numbers of the illustrations as a marginal gloss is a comfortable feature; but the antiphony between plates and text makes one wish (as often in art books) for two volumes.

Charles de Tolnay has done a favor by setting forth so briefly and in very graphic English material that has in large part been hidden in voluminous texts in other languages. The book is likely to lead readers and collectors farther, and that is a happy circumstance.

WINSLOW AMES.

O. Benesch.—*Artistic and Intellectual Trends from Rubens to Daumier as shown in Book Illustration*.—Cambridge, Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, Harvard College Library, 1943.

This small volume, beautifully presented, contains the text of three lectures given at Harvard in 1942 under the auspices of the Department of Graphic Arts which is responsible for its publication.

It was somewhat of a tour de force to sketch in three lectures the evolution of Book Illustration from Rubens to Daumier; but the former Curator of the Albertina Museum was more than equal to the task. Thanks to his erudition, he was able to select the most significant examples from this large store of material. This selection has not been made from a narrowly technical point of view. Graphic Arts are essentially "illustrative" arts,—illustrative not only of a text, but of a culture, a society, a phase of civilisation: they mirror the physiognomy of an epoch,—political, religious or scientific—and derive from it a deep significance. Dr. Benesch does not isolate the picture from the context, nor from life. Very opportunely, he reminds us that Callot is a contemporary of Fermat, and also of Saint Francis de Sales. On the other hand, the very variety of his examples reveals that despite national or individual differences, each period has its own style (in the fullest sense of the word), and stamps it upon all its creations;—whether it be morality or astronomy, warfare or gardening; even its dreams and phantasies are shaped in the same mould.

Two chapters out of three are devoted to the XVIIth Century, which Dr. Benesch considers, and rightly so, as a period which has been unduly neglected. He brings to light either little-known designs of great masters, or masterpieces of forgotten artists, such as the plates of Francis Barlow, of a Miltonian majesty, and the lively imagery of these moral *Emblems*, so characteristic of the Baroque age. Dr. Benesch makes more than one important discovery along the way. For instance, when discussing Rembrandt as an illustrator, he reveals that *The Storm on the Sea of Galilee* (now at the Gardner Museum) is a masterly transposition of a dull engraving of W. Basse for Herkmans' *Praise of Navigation*.

The third chapter, which covers both the XVIIIth and XIXth Centuries, is of necessity more cursory. In it the author stresses the increasingly important role of illustration, and the reciprocal influence of Literature and the Graphic Arts; also, he discerns two groups of artists, "realists" and "visionaries", occasionally combined in a caricaturist of genius, such as Goya or Daumier.

With its wealth of illuminating remarks and inviting perspectives, this volume is a most stimulating guide to a little-known field, provided as it is with illustrations, notes and index. Let us hope that some day Dr. Benesch will give us the badly needed work on *Book Illustration in the Baroque Period*, a subject which he is so well qualified to treat at length.

J. SEZNEC.

KENNETH JOHN CONANT, *A Brief Commentary on Early Mediaeval Church Architecture, with especial reference to Lost Monuments*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1942, 10½ x 8½, front, XI—34 p., L pl. \$2.00 (Public Lectures in Fine Arts).

The practice of publishing lectures which are of permanent value and which consequently should be diffused on the largest possible scale is indeed a most happy one. And we are much indebted to the Johns Hopkins Press for thus keeping a permanent record of the six excellent lectures delivered in November 1939 by Professor Kenneth John Conant at the Johns Hopkins University.

Students who have not attended those lectures—and forcibly they are in overwhelming majority—are thanks to this publication given the privilege not only of following Professor Conant's teaching during the necessarily brief duration of a lecture; they are also given the chance of reflecting upon it while turning these pages, studying the fine selection of their illustrations, re-reading such passages that could not at once be fully understood or others which constitute a helpful background for further research in the same field. We must emphasize, however, that while the extreme clarity, which is among the best qualities of this teaching and of its records, will hardly permit any lack of understanding, there will hardly be a new student of the subject who will escape going to this source for a first exploration of the complex domain of Gothic art's formation. As they are traced here,—stage by stage within extremely summarized chapters, throughout the centuries of their evolution—the trends followed by Gothic art before its complete crystallization are as clearly designed here as if they had been drawn on a map. Among the often interpenetrated successive stylistic phases of the long incubation period—with its deep Oriental, Greek and Roman roots disguised under the foundations of the first synthesis produced by the Byzantine genius—the architectural forms of expression, slowly evolving towards the purely Gothic achievement, appear on this imaginary map as though according to a kind of unavoidable fatality or logic. The study of *St. Sophia of Constantinople* thus emerges from a short glance, as illuminating as it is brief, at the *Preparation for Byzantine Architecture*, itself established upon an analysis of the basilican style through the study of the old St. Peter's basilica in Rome. Then, in between the chapter on *St. Sophia and its Descendance*, and that on *The Developing Romanesque of France and especially of Burgundy*,

is evoked all the richness of architectural modulations, the developing progress of which prepares the lost masterpiece of the third church of Cluny where, as the author shows, another synthesis was produced by *The Fully Developed Romanesque* genius. Thence, finally, we reach the study of *Cluny and the New Architecture—Gothic* through the last stage of this continuous line of evolution comprised between the romanesque accomplishment and the last synthesis evolved by the Gothic genius.

The particular value of this brilliant survey lies in its being based upon "and illustrated almost entirely with buildings extant in fragmentary or altered form, if at all". The author's vast experience of the exploration and restoration work, to which he modestly did not refer in this book but which is known to have magnificently enriched the mediaeval archives by the reconstitution and resurrection of the greatest of their lost monuments (those of Cluny, to be precise)—is to a large extent undoubtedly responsible for his faculty of embracing in a single and homogeneous look the history of more than a thousand years of architectural creation.

There is indeed in the background of these strongly designed broad outlines a sharp sense of the smallest architectural detail and of the individual evolution of that detail in each monument and from one monument to the other of the same epoch, or from one epoch to the other, passing through the many intermediary phases which constitute what the historian later labels transition periods. We are thus invited to follow the life of each monument and the part played in that life by all the particular elements of its anatomy, as if it were the life of a human being. Hence we are brought to discover the progressive destiny, from one generation to the other, of the architectural style slowly elaborated by the chain of all these details and by this long sequence of monuments, as if it were the history of a people. And the whole evolution finally becomes part of the history of a civilization, just as the development of any living individual's destiny is a part of it.

We can only compare to the delight which a mathematician gains from the solution of a problem through a long series of intermediary solutions, the joy of a historian who thus follows the crystallization of a definite style suddenly appearing in so simple a way—as the termination of so straight a road—above the gradually vanishing intermingled trends of influences, multiple crossroads, and, at the origin, the innumerable isolated struggles of each element involved for its own determination, unconsciously participating in the struggle of the whole style for its perfection and supremacy, which are the very conditions of its life.

And indeed, Professor Conant's approach to the study of architecture is exactly that of a pure mathematician, of a scientist deeply respectful of the laws dominating and governing the material which he handles and which he is bound to study as a mere observer with no attempt at personal interference, in close relation to those fatal and unavoidable laws against which no speculation of the mind can exert any power. "If for each style," says Professor Conant in his introduction, "we can understand the generative unit-element developed by the structural engineers and the various inventive schemes for its employ developed by the architects, together with

the concordant systems of embellishment developed by the decorators, we shall have no need for recondite systems of appreciation".

We cannot help, especially on the eve of the first anniversary of the death of our beloved teacher, Professor Henri Focillon, to draw a parallel between that scientist's approach and that which was displayed throughout all his oeuvre by the great author of *The Life of Forms in Art*. The whole theory which Professor Conant has made his own from actual work and positive experiment on the spot extraordinarily coincides with the conclusions of what has been too often taken as the purely spiritual speculations of a metaphysically-minded scholar—in Professor Focillon's teachings. The life of architectural elements integrating and defining the destiny of styles, as it is quasi-mathematically designed by Professor Conant—cannot but vividly recall the self-determination which Professor Focillon claimed for the various artistic forms considered as living beings accomplishing the quasi-fatal cycle of their destinies within the wide realms of time and space. And it is a great intellectual pleasure and simultaneously a just tribute to a glorious and cherished memory to reach the same summit of knowledge after having departed from what may only erroneously seem to be opposite and even contradictory poles of investigation.

ASSIA R. VISSON.

ANDRE MASSON, *Anatomy of my Universe*, New York, Curt Valentin, 1943, 9 x 6, front, s.p., XXX pl. \$6.00

It is again to Henri Focillon's universe of thought that we are brought by the few pages which Andre Masson writes as a prologue to the series of plates where, to adopt the author's style, the written thought is expressed in the form of drawing. As in the case of *Mythology of Being*, which we have previously reviewed on these pages, these are excellent living documents on the artist's process of creation. In this prologue, it is moreover a sort of implicit confession. And it is something which may have truly delighted the author of *The Life of Forms in Art*. One can scarcely resist the pleasure of quoting such lines in which there is a particularly obvious correspondence between the artist's confession and the great scholar's anticipation of it.

"This graphic world is a universe that I create . . . whence come these imagined forms? . . . They come from my impassioned meditation . . . But soon, . . . there appear forms already plastic like dreams . . . It is their polymorphous play that I orchestrate in their becoming . . . I let my reason go as far as it can . . . It traverses the court of objects and reaches finally a wasteland of infinite desolation; it is a truly human place, which creates its own time . . . Here, a prisoner escaped from Plato's cave, I shall no longer be subject to his condemnation of imitated reality. I would be only a point of intersection, a magnetic needle, a medium . . .

"Later in the solitude of the Alps, I discovered the flight of the eagle tracing its perfect geometry in filigrane on the arena of heaven. The secret world of Analogy, the magic of the Sign, the transcendence of Number were thus revealed to me . . . No hierarchy in the cycle of natural forms. The royal structure of the human body is no more beautiful than the radiolaria, an oceanic star with solid rays. In digressing I shall say

a word about the fascinating power of regular forms . . . I am the mirror in which the fraternal kingdoms and the four elements are reflected . . ."

In fact, we should have quoted every line. Or, better—as an enemy of aesthetics and of art criticism would say—we should have reproduced some of the plates instead, shown the art itself instead of striving after its many-worded but essentially inadequate explanation. But the explanation is not ours. It is not Henri Focillon's. It is not second-hand. And it is not, as it is so often proclaimed, an abuse by the interpreter of the original thought, its means, its ways, its aims. It is that original thought itself. It is another masterpiece of Masson. The

written creation put into the service of the designed, the painted one—but nevertheless a masterpiece in itself. We quoted it first for its relation with Henri Focillon's constructions. We continued to quote it for its intrinsic value. It is that value which should not be overlooked in a hasty attempt to turn the pages and study and admire the plates which testify to the painter's genius. The written genius of Masson is less known, undoubtedly less cherished by the artist himself. It is also much more elusive of definition or explanation. As the best in art, it has to be *seen* and then felt in order to be understood.

A. R. V.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Wildenstein:

In the November issue of your publication, there appeared a book review of my "*Medieval American Art*" by Robert C. Smith. Its distinguished tone, erudite approach, and the very favorable treatment of my book which he calls "a best-seller in the field of fine arts publications," might lead your readers to ask why I should write a reply to it. However, Dr. Smith remarks on my usage of the word "medieval" and, since one or two other reviewers in this country have also questioned the application of this term to the art of the Americas before contact with the white man, I should like to clarify my point of view.

I chose these pages for the particular reason that the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts" showed at an early date a pioneering and understanding attitude toward this subject, by publishing in Paris in 1929 *L'Art Précolombien* with the cooperation of outstanding archaeologists of France, and by bringing out as early as 1933, the article *L'Art Maya*, by Frans Blom, while editorial boards of art-historical publications here were turning down contributions from this field in much more recent years.

The art of the Americas before Columbus is weighted down by a double handicap. Everyone who has studied it comes to the realization that we shall never be able to visualize even approximately the grandeur of those bygone centuries. Not one other civilization was destroyed so suddenly and so brutally, nor were climatic conditions elsewhere so destructive in obliterating the remnants of a great artistic past. Further, the ideal of beauty of the native American cultures was uninfluenced by any outside source; thus it is more alien to us than the other extra-European arts, which had decades—often centuries—to dawn upon our widening horizon of art understanding.

Nevertheless, there are psychological parallels between the art of medieval Europe and that of the Americas—notably, the preoccupation with the transcendental, as against the naturalism of the ancient Classic world—which make the character of these two arts of the same period analogous in quality. The word "medieval" is

used in connection with Palestine, India, Cambodia, China, in interpreting religious, philosophical, and artistic concepts that show resemblances, similarities, and contrasts with contemporaneous Europe; why not with America also?

The meaning of words changes with time, and even contemporaneously may convey a different idea in different countries. "Gothic" implies even today in Italian something barbarous, grotesque, and alien. Webster's and Oxford dictionaries include for the same word, "rude, rough, barbaric, uncouth" among their definitions. And we can remember when the label for a painting: "L'Impression", was first used in a sarcastic manner—from which later was derived the heading of an important chapter in the history of art.

In the nomenclature of the native civilization of the Americas, the word "pre-Columbian" is also open to criticism. While America was discovered in 1492, the art in this hemisphere went on undisturbed for decades and in certain districts it took nearly a half century for it to feel the first impact of European civilization. "Pre-Hispanic" is again unsatisfactory, since Portuguese, English, French, Dutch, and other nations took part in the conquest of this continent. The adjective "ancient" is hackneyed and has lost its contours.

To a certain degree, the word "medieval" in my title was intended as a challenge. However, European medievalists, with whom I discussed it during the years in which I worked on my survey and contemplated this title, did not voice any objection to it. My reviewers in Latin America, from Mexico to Peru,—who are, more than we, guardians of their medieval heritage—found my title "justified," "suggestive," and "inspiring". John Dewey, dean of American philosophers, calls the "just after absolutes, a striking feature of American character structure"; and this peculiarity also throws its shadow on our approach to the humanities.

Yours very sincerely,

PÁL KELEMEN,

Norfolk, Connecticut.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

- OTTO BRENDDEL was Assistant Keeper, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen (1923-26); Assistant, Central Office (1928-29), Traveling Fellow (1929-30), German Archaeological Institute, Berlin; and First Assistant (1932-36), German Archaeological Institute, Rome; Research Fellow, Kings College, New Castle upon Tyne (1936-37); Visiting Assistant Professor, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri (1939-41). Since 1941 he has been Associate Professor, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. He has worked extensively in the archaeological field and, besides his book on the *Iconography of King Augustus* (1932), he has published a long series of archaeological studies. In the present issue he discusses the: *Origin and Meaning of the Mandorla* page 5
- LEO VAN PUYVELDE was for many years the Director of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium in Brussels, and since the invasion of Belgium has been working in England upon the catalogue of drawings of the Royal Collections in Windsor Castle, of which a first volume, on the Flemish drawings, has been issued. His first contribution to the American edition of the "Gazette" is his article in the current issue on: *A Self-Portrait by the Young Rubens* page 25
which he had opportunity to study during his trip to this country in 1939.
- MARTIN SEBASTIAN SORIA was a graduate student at Harvard University, where he received the Bacon Traveling Fellowship. Last year the American Council of Learned Societies gave him a grant for research in early Colonial Art in Mexico. His special field of study is Spanish and Spanish American painting since the late Renaissance. In his article of the current issue: *Francisco de Zurbarán: A Study of His Style* page 33
he produces the first part of his recent research upon Zurbarán's oeuvre.
- MANUEL ROMERO DE TERREROS, Marques de San Francisco, professor in the National University in Mexico, honorary member of the Institute de Investigaciones Historicas of Mexico, who studied in England, has made the Viceregal period of the history of Mexico his special field of study. He has written several books on Spanish colonial history and art, mostly published in Spanish. In this issue he publishes: *A Brief Survey of Mexican Colonial Sculpture* page 49
- FRANCIS ST. GEORGE SPENDLOVE took up in 1930 the study of Chinese art and archaeology and was awarded in 1936 the Academic Post. Graduate Diploma in Archaeology (China) of the University of London. He was Assistant Secretary, and Editor of the Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Chinese Art in London (1935-1936). He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and of the Royal Geographical Society, and a member of the American Oriental Society, the Royal Asiatic Society of London and the Museums Association, England. He has been associated since 1936 with the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, Toronto where he serves as Assistant Keeper of the Later European Collections and is in charge of its East Indian Collection. In the current issue he is publishing: *The Royal Ontario Museum's "Dancing Siva"* page 59
- BIBLIOGRAPHY in this issue page 61
is by WINSLOW AMES, former Director of the Lyman Allyn Museum at New London, Connecticut, JEAN J. SEZNEC, Associate Professor of Romance Languages at Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., and by Mrs. ASSIA R. VISSON, associated with the "Gazette" since 1930 and Secretary to its Council.
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